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An Irishman's Story

By Justin McCarthy

Author of "A History of Our Own Times" etc., etc.

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Dedication

THIS "IRISHMAN'S STORY"

I DEDICATE

TO ANOTHER IRISHMAN

MY SON

JUSTIN HUNTLEY McCARTHY

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An Irishman's Story

CHAPTER I

"RIVER OF MY YOUTH"

My earliest memories of life are associated with river and sea and low-lying hills, with meadows and gardens and distant views of bolder heights crowned with some ancient ruin. The river and the sea gave me my playground, and I have never even in my most recent days caught sight of a ruined castle or abbey without finding my mind carried back to those scenes of boyhood and of youth which made the picturesque surroundings of my birthplace. That birthplace was in the near neighbourhood of the city of Cork in the south of Ireland, and the whole surrounding region was rich in delightful scenery, whether the gazer looked upon land or water or took in both together with the same glance. The river Lee flows down from amid the far hills, a narrow stream until it reaches the city of Cork, which it passes through, broadening as it emerges from the streets and the quays, until it pours itself, now a powerful river, into the

large harbour then called Cove and more lately re-christened as Queenstown, a great bay almost land-locked and with one opening between two fortress-crowned hills, outside which lies the sea itself. I have seen many rivers and harbours in foreign countries on this side of the Atlantic and the other, but I have seldom looked upon a scene more fascinating to the eye and to the mind than that which was so familiar to my boyhood. My earliest home was near the city itself, but it was an easy task for us young fellows to get into a boat and work our oars until we had reached the harbour and passed outside it to the tossing sea. At that time the boys I knew cared for little in the way of sport which was not associated with the river and the sea, with boating and swimming. I do not remember that either cricket or football was much of a favourite pastime among young lads of our set, and although we were all glad to get a chance of mounting a horse I do not recollect that we had any inordinate passion for races. Our frequent intervals of recreation were given up either to long exploring rambles about the country or to that river and sea which we loved in all hours and in all weathers. It may seem somewhat strange to speak of boys in an Irish city as indifferent to the temptations of the racecourse and the hunting-field, for all the most time-honoured traditions have associated the young Irishman with a passion for such sport, but I am describ-

ing only the young fellows who constituted the set to which I belonged in those far-off days of which I am now writing. The hero of that really great Irish novel "The Collegians," when contemplating in a moment of melancholy retrospection the delights of his boyish days, dwells with a special rapture on "my boat, the broad river, the rough west wind, the broken waves and the heart at rest." I think I may allow these words to sum up the principal joys of life as they presented themselves to the minds and the senses of the young men with whom I was best acquainted in the years before the great Irish famine of 1846 and 1847 had spread its desolation over the land.

Our family household consisted of six members, — my father and mother, my sister and brother, myself and a dear old maiden aunt, my mother's eldest sister, who always lived with us and lent an active hand in keeping straight the affairs of our modest homestead. I should think our condition at that time might well have been described by the somewhat familiar phrase of "genteel poverty." My father held the office of clerk to the city magistrates and had studied law a good deal, although, owing to lack of means, he was never called to either of the legal professions. He was a man of much reading, with a thorough love for books and, as I believe, a distinct literary gift which might under other conditions have

enabled him to win some position as a writer. He wrote many poems and essays which I still think gave good promise for a literary career, but he only wrote occasionally,and never gave himself up or had the means of giving himself up to the writer's calling. He had had the honour of conversing with Sir Walter Scott when the great novelist paid his visit to Ireland. He had met Thomas Moore and had some personal acquaintanceship with Lady Morgan and Gerald Griffin and the Rev. Francis Mahony, the Roman Catholic clergyman who won fame under the assumed name of "Father Prout." My father was well acquainted with Latin and Greek, more especially with Greek, a language for which he had an intense affection, and he was familiar with most of the great classical authors. Among Latin poets he was especially attracted by Horace, and he often suggested the quaint and humorous idea that Horace ought to have lived in the days when the tobacco-plant had found its uses, and that some of Horace's poems seemed as if they might have been composed while their author was enjoying the soothing and inspiring delights of a comfortable pipe.

My father and a small circle of his friends would seem to have anticipated in their own studies and teachings that revival of the Gaelic tongue and literature which is so remarkable a phenomenon of the present day in Ireland. He could read the

Irish language and could speak it a little, and was well acquainted with its surviving literature. He had even studied very carefully that ancient Ogham character, the peculiar kind of writing used by the ancient Irish and other Celtic races, and employed especially on ancient monuments and tablets. He made many efforts to instruct his two sons in this peculiar form of writing, but I am afraid without any marked success so far as we two were concerned. He and some of his friends formed a local society for the diffusion of this knowledge and for the general revival of our ancient literature. He knew the whole history and the legendary adornings of every old abbey and castle in the south of Ireland. One of the subjects in which he took the deepest and most constant interest was the origin and the archæology of those Round Towers which form so peculiar a feature of Irish landscape. He wrote numbers of articles for local magazines and newspapers on this subject, and entered into various controversies thereon with contemporary writers, some of them men of scholarly and literary eminence. Had he given up the whole of his leisure time to these studies and writings he might, I feel well assured, have made for himself an enduring name in that field of work. But he was rather too discursive in his tastes, and was now striving to be a poet and now an essayist and again a composer of story and romance.

My mother and sister live always in my memory as the ideals of womanhood. Looking back as carefully and thoughtfully as I can, I recall nothing in the character of either woman which suggests aught but purity, sweetness, utter unselfishness, and loving devotion to every duty. My sister seems to me to have had her mother's virtues and her father's literary tastes. She was an accomplished French and Italian scholar, and published in a magazine a full translation of one of George Sand's novels, and several versions of poems by Petrarch and Alfieri. She only lived to enter upon womanhood. I well remember when we were both children her coming to me one day triumphantly with the announcement that she was now ten years old, and that in ten years more she should be twenty. She had only just passed out of her twentieth year when she passed out of life altogether. She was about a year older than I, and it was one of my mother's humorous sayings that her daughter — her name was Ely — was born a slave, while I, Justin, was born a free man, because Ely was born before the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, while I was born in the year after it had become law.

My brother Frank was three years younger than I, and his tastes were rather artistic than literary. He had a great ambition to become a painter, but at a very early stage of his career he had to work hard for a living, and was only able to use the

pencil at odd times and without any chance of regular study. He emigrated to America while still very young, and settled down in New York as an office clerk in what is called a wholesale dry-goods store, and he soon got married to a gifted and charming American girl. He kept to his painting all the time, and succeeded in having several landscapes hung in New York art galleries. He reproduced with feeling the beauty of American autumnal scenery and foliage, and he might probably have come to live by art, but he soon had a growing family and was afraid to run the risk of giving up his regular business. He served on the Northern side during the great American Civil War, and although he never received a wound in the field, yet the camping out in rains and winds and snow caused some injury to his lungs, which proved to be permanent, and brought his career to an early close. While he was still living and happy, and when the war had passed into history, I made my first visit to America, and there my family and I had constant opportunities of meeting Frank and his wife and children. I have the most delightful memories of happy days and evenings spent with him and his wife in a quaint old house, mainly built of stone, which they used to occupy near to the village as it then was — I do not know what it is now — of Bayonne in New Jersey, not far from New York. We spent nearly two years in the States

during that first visit, and soon afterwards paid a second visit which occupied nearly a year, and each time we had the companionship of Frank and his wife and children. When I paid my latest visit to the States, many years after, Frank was in his grave. One of his sons, who bears my name, Justin, is already a rising man and holds an honourable position in the State administration of New York.

My mother spent her closing years in my London home and was buried in the Catholic cemetery at Kensal Green. I ought to say that long before my sister's death or my brother's departure for America our home in Cork had been reduced to something like very genuine and not merely genteel poverty. I was barely in my seventeenth year when I found that on my exertions the support of the family had come to depend. I was at that time studying for the legal profession in the office of a distinguished solicitor in Cork who was a friend of our family. Under the new conditions of our life it was utterly impossible that I could have any hope of getting money enough to pay the amount necessary for my admission to the bar, even if my family and I could have lived upon nothing during the time of my probation. The ambition to become an advocate had therefore to be suppressed in a moment, and my immediate difficulty was how to obtain the means of making even the barest living.

Then a friend came to our help. This friend was the late John Francis Maguire, proprietor and editor of the "Cork Examiner," then as now a flourishing newspaper. Maguire was by profession a barrister, and took a leading part in Irish political life. He was for many years a distinguished member of the House of Commons, and there are many members of that House still living who would gladly, I am sure, bear a cordial tribute to his personal character and to the reputation which he won for eloquence, earnestness, sincerity, and moderation in the House during a long period of political trouble. John Francis Maguire's suggestion to me was that I should join the reporting staff of the "Cork Examiner" at once, that I should learn and practise shorthand, of which I then knew nothing, in the office of the newspaper, and he offered to pay me the regular salary of a reporter even during the time while I was merely striving to gain a knowledge of the reporter's work. That salary was one pound a week to begin with. This was the generous offer of a friend, and I need hardly say that it was accepted with gratitude. My family had now, at all events, something to live upon from week to week, while those of us who could work were trying to develop their capacities for working. My sister gave lessons in French and Italian to some girls in the city, and my brother got some very poor clerkship in a local business. Thus the serious work of life began for us.

I have anticipated by many years a great part of the story of my family and shall have to make allusion now and again in the progress of my narrative to events already mentioned in this opening chapter. My desire is to spare my readers as much as I can the passages of merely domestic interest, which, although they formed very often the most momentous and engrossing events of my life, have yet no fair claim on the attention of the public. The loves and the sorrows of most men and women have a common origin and nature, and my object in writing this volume is to tell rather of what I saw and heard than what I felt as I worked my way through life. Mine, I may say at once, has not been a life of much adventure, nor has it been diversified by many ups and downs, but it has given me opportunities of meeting many men and women about whom the world will always be glad to read, and of taking part in some political and literary movements which are likely to be subjects of study to succeeding generations. I have lived through great changes in political systems, in scientific thought, and in national development, and it has been my good fortune to know something of many or most of those who in these countries and in some foreign states as well had much to do with the creation of the new chapters in practical and intellectual development.

The set to which I belonged in these younger days of mine was especially and even intensely

literary and artistic. The comrades with whom I mostly associated either belonged to the class who had to make a living by law or medicine or journalism or painting and sculpture, or were the sons of men thus engaged. We were nearly all poor, but we all belonged to families in which education counted for much and where scholarly studies always found encouragement. There was little chance then of university education for the Catholic youths who made up the rising generation of Irishmen. The education of the young fellows whose parents could not afford to pay for their schooling was chiefly conducted by the monks of the various orders, and these seem to have done their work of teaching marvellously well. I can positively affirm that among the young men who were my closest companions and whose parents almost all belonged to what I may describe as a struggling class, there was not one who could read only the English language. We could read our Latin and make something of our Greek, most of us could read French, some few Italian, and many of us were already taking to the study of German. Few of us professed to speak any of these foreign tongues, and indeed hardly one of those whom I knew had ever then been outside the limits of the British islands; but so far as the reading of books went we scorned to confine ourselves to a mere acquaintance with English literature. I have seen a good deal of the world since those early days of which I am

writing, have mingled in many different communities, and I can positively say that I have never met with a set of young men more happily endowed with literary tastes and more given to steady literary culture than that which I can well remember in my native city during those far-off years.

My father was so enterprising as to prevail upon a local bookseller to start a monthly periodical entitled the "Cork Magazine." Our city had already boasted of so pretentious a publication as a quarterly review all to itself. It was called "Bolster's Quarterly Magazine" from the name, if I remember rightly, of the bookseller who ventured on the experiment of its publication, and my father used to contribute regularly to its pages. I believe it flourished for a considerable time, but it was not likely to accomplish quite a paying success in so small a community and it had passed out of sight before the founding of the "Cork Magazine." To this later periodical my father contributed a romance constructed from Irish history, and I may say that my own first effort at story-writing appeared in its pages. I have often in later days regarded it as a somewhat curious fact that the hero of that narrative bore the name of Parnell, although I need hardly say that the Parnell, who was long afterwards to be my political leader, must have been but an infant at the time. Parnell, however, was the Christian name of my hero. My sister contributed poems of her

own and translations from French and Italian to the "Cork Magazine," and more than one young writer who afterwards made a certain mark in literature first appeared before the public in these same pages.

We had two well-organised literary societies in Cork, the older of which was named the Cork Literary and Scientific Society and the younger the Cork Historical Society. The older institution flourishes, I believe, up to the present day, but the younger has long since passed, let us hope in music, out of sight. The Literary and Scientific Society was conducted chiefly by the elders of the city, although it welcomed the membership and the intellectual efforts of the youngsters, but the strong national feeling which was then reviving in the south of Ireland made most of us young fellows rather impatient of its non-political character and the steady loyalty of its opinions. The influence of the Young Ireland movement was then beginning to be very powerful in Dublin and through all the southern and western regions of the island, and we young men were eager for a literary association in which we could give some expression to our patriotic impulses and yearnings. Therefore the Historical Society was a sort of secession from and revolt against the grave and colourless respectability of the earlier institution, and we who formed the newer organisation could not endure the restrictions placed upon our impassioned elo-

quence. The Young Ireland movement had risen against the steady constitutionalism of Daniel O'Connell's latest days, and "The Nation" newspaper, founded by Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon, father of my dear friend the John Dillon of our present time, and inspired by the poetic genius of Thomas Davis, had quickened with a new life the national sentiments of Ireland. A fervour of patriotic emotion filled the hearts of Irish boys as well as men in that animated and eager time. The movement set going by "The Nation," and maintained by all newspapers of the same order since those days, was literary as well as political, and we were all filled with the ambition, we young fellows, to be readers of books and makers of verses as well as to be upholders of the Irish national flag. It was an intensely romantic period for the youngsters at least, and there was a generous ardour about it the mere recollection of which might well recall deep emotion in the hearts of those oldsters among us who can still remember the period when Thomas Davis and James Clarence Mangan were sounding the chords of the national harp. I always associate the time of that national and literary revival with the river and the hills and the sea which made the charm of my native city. Most of the young men whom I then knew wrote verses and fondly believed that they were destined to become poets. The air seems to have been instinct with music and with

poetry, and looking back now upon that time I see the world I then knew was a world of youth and patriotic sentiment and hope. To adopt a charming phrase once used in a speech by the late Lord Granville, no one ever was so young as we were then.

CHAPTER II

MY SCHOOLMASTER

I MAY say at the outset that I had more than one schoolmaster in my boyish days, but there was one and one only to whom I owe any teaching which was of value to me in my after-life, and to whom I owe the beginning at least of any literary or scholastic instruction it was my good fortune to acquire during a life much occupied in the reading and study of books. It is a curious instance of the mystic laws of association that whenever I think of that gifted teacher and dear friend there comes up into my mind a picture of the Parthenon at Athens, that noble monument of classic antiquity, with which I became well acquainted at a later period of my life. The explanation of this connection of ideas is found in the fact that in the private room of my dear old teacher there was a beautiful miniature model in white marble of the Parthenon as it stands on the Acropolis. My boyish eyes were fascinated by this model from the first moment when I looked upon it, and my teacher was delighted to tell me all about it and its history, the scene it adorned and the noble literature it illustrated, and thus to arouse in my mind

a longing to know more and more about Greece and its literature and art. The incident in itself serves very well to explain the kind of influence which my teacher always endeavoured to exercise over his pupils. His idea of teaching was first of all to awaken in his pupils a sincere desire to learn. His firm conviction was that all methodical teaching is of little avail unless it can arouse in the pupil that sympathetic desire to become taught and to profit by the instruction.

The first school I attended for some years was a kind of public seminary in Cork, where we went through the ordinary course of elementary instruction in English grammar, arithmetic, mathematics, geography, the use of the globes, and all the other recognised subjects of necessary education for boys. We had to commit all sorts of rules to memory; we got everything "by heart," as the phrase goes; we had to repeat over and over again every lesson thus taught to us; and no particular trouble was taken to discover whether or not we attached any real meaning to the phrases which we had to patter out word by word. We had to inform our teacher again and again that language consists of orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody; we had to state in the words committed to memory the difference between an acute angle and an obtuse angle; and to repeat without hesitation the words which describe what is a continent, what is an island, what is an isthmus, and so on. Those

of us who had fairly good memories were soon able to repeat these formularies word for word, and then we were advanced to learn something else on the same principle and after the same fashion. Most of us little boys were quite content when we could repeat the various definitions mechanically, and we gave ourselves no concern about the meaning of what we were saying or indeed disturbed our minds by a thought as to whether it had any meaning whatever. I hope that there were some little boys in the school who had intellects of a more inquiring order, and who therefore derived some benefit from the lessons thus drilled into us; but I can confidently say for myself that I never took any thought upon the subject and regarded my daily task merely as a sort of penal process to be got through as a matter of discipline during the weary hours of school work allotted to each day. My heart was filled, as I am sure the hearts of most of my comrades were, with a longing for the hour when the end of the day's school-teaching should come and bring with it freedom to return to the out-of-door amusements which we loved and the books which we really cared to read. I spent some two years, I think, at that school, and I can confidently assert that I learned as little as it was possible for any human being to learn even under such conditions. Then my father grew impatient that I should begin to have what used to be called a classical education.

My English scholastic studies came to an unprofitable end, and I was removed to the only other school I ever attended, and put under the care of the schoolmaster by whom for the first time I was really taught how to learn.

My schoolmaster — my only schoolmaster as I may well call him — was a Cork man named John Goulding, who had been educated for the priesthood, and had, I believe, spent some years in Rome, but owing to ill health had been compelled to give up all hope of becoming a priest and undergoing the severe labours of such a calling. Mr. Goulding must have been some seventy years of age when I first found a place in his schoolroom. My recollection of him is that his face appeared to be much older than his figure. He was a tall man, — stood quite six feet high, I think, — and his form was one of strength and symmetry, while all his movements were quick, active, and vigorous. His face was clean-shaven, and his head and high forehead were crowned by a mass of thick white hair which even yet had not quite had the curl taken out of it. The general expression of the face when he was not speaking was thoughtful and even melancholy, but when he spoke with animation his eyes lighted up with an inspiriting brightness. He was fond of movement, and even while examining his pupils or explaining some subject to them it was his common habit to walk rapidly up and down his room, and indeed he

seldom remained seated for any great length of time. Yet there was nothing fussy or even impetuous about his movements — they only illustrated his physical vigour and mental activity, and they never marred the grace and dignity which belonged to him. In order to obtain a living, he had opened a school in Cork, where he received and educated the sons of his friends and of those others to whom his capacity as a teacher was well known. In a novel of mine published not long ago and entitled "Mononia," I have described this teacher of mine under the name of "Mr. Conrad." In that book I gave at greater length than is necessary for my purpose in the present volume some account of the man himself and of his ideas and plans on the subject of education. I may say that he taught upon a system which so far as I know was but little practised in the schools of a provincial town in those far-off days. To begin with, he repudiated altogether the practice of corporal punishment, a process which at that time was devoutly regarded by most people as an absolutely essential condition to the proper bringing-up of boys. He excluded the idea of any manner of punishment from his teaching, and would not even condemn his pupils to a penal prolongation of studies or to retention at their desks after the usual hour for the conclusion of the day's task. He was entirely opposed to the general idea of compelling boys to get long lessons by heart, and to prove their

acquisition of knowledge by the mere repetition of words. His great object was first to get the boys to understand what they were listening to and what they were talking about, and then to feel a genuine interest in each subject and a sincere desire to know more and more about it. He took care to make every subject perfectly clear to the minds of his pupils and to arouse in them a living and an enduring interest. He taught us Greek and Latin grammar as we went on studying the text of an author, — he taught us these languages, in fact, just as a child is taught his own native language. We read to him appointed passages from a classic author, first in the original tongue and then in our efforts at translation, the teacher helping us with every word and explaining its reference to the other words in the sentence. He asked us many questions and encouraged us to put to him as many questions as we wished. He elucidated every sentence by explanations and comments of his own. He told us all about the places and the people and the literature represented in the volume we were studying, and frequently got us to explain how we understood each passage and what ideas it gave to our minds. He described to us the scenes and the life which each chapter illustrated, and by the help of his own travels and personal observation he was able to illumine every subject and fill it with a living interest for us.

An ordinary observer, if he happened to be in the school-room at the time, might have felt somewhat surprised to find the teacher engaged to all appearance in a mere conversation with his pupils over some Latin or Greek book and not performing any of the work which is conventionally regarded as the proper business of an instructor. By this somewhat unusual process of teaching, Mr. Goulding was able to awaken in the minds of his boys a keen and animated interest in every author whom we were studying, and to make us anxious to read more and more and learn more and more of the books which were brought under our notice. One result of this was that we all made it our business and found it our pleasure to spend a great part of our evening hours at home in studying and re-studying the text and following the author into passages which had not been yet brought under our notice by the teacher. We were thus able to tell him next day what we had been doing and how much we had learned out of school. Mr. Goulding, who had been expecting some such result, was sure to ask us every day what progress we had been making without his help, and we repeated to him our efforts at translation and talked them over thoroughly with him. A natural and not unwholesome rivalry thus sprang up among us. Each boy felt anxious to show that he had read more and understood better than some of his comrades, and thus the

very effect was produced which Mr. Goulding most desired to create — the effect of making us self-teaching as well as taught. Of course there were boys of nature too indolent and indifferent to get the full benefit of this kind of education; but Mr. Goulding thoroughly understood that there were some boys who were not likely to learn much of anything under any system of instruction, and he was not prepared to sacrifice the capacity of the brighter boys by keeping them down to a mere routine system which could only leave them on a level with the inferior intelligences. Those of us who really wished to learn were thus led on to be students on our own account and for the genuine love of the books we were reading. Many of us spent much of our leisure time in reading on and on through the authors set before us, and even to the study of books not yet set out for us as a part of our school instruction. I know that for myself my interest in Cæsar's "Commentaries" was made so quick and genuine that I had read the whole of the work long before we at school had made much progress with the text, and that I began the study of other books which had not yet become a part of our regular course. If a boy showed himself hopelessly apathetic or stupidly unwilling to learn, Mr. Goulding generally represented to the parents of such a boy that there was no use in trying to make him a student of Greek and Latin, and that he had better be removed

from the school altogether, and set down to some other course of instruction which might appeal to whatever intelligence he had in him.

The great result of his system of teaching was that it filled us with a desire to understand and appreciate every author we read, and to expand our field of knowledge. Mr. Goulding talked to us of the great English as well as the great classic authors, and he had much to tell us about every book, which helped us to understand and to feel attracted by its subject and its place in literature. He gave no prizes or rewards of any kind for success in any branch of study beyond his own encouragement, approval, and praise; for he always explained to us that the best reward of reading, when well chosen, came from the reading and the knowledge itself. I suppose that I should have been, like many of my schoolmates, a reading boy in whatever case, for I was always intensely fond of books; but I do not believe that I should ever have gained in the same short time under a different system of teaching such a love for the best in literature as Mr. Goulding's education awakened in my young mind. In this way I acquired while still in the years of boyhood a good general knowledge of all the great Greek and Roman authors and an intense love for their books, and I soon became able to read fluently for my own delight the masterpieces of Greek and Roman epic and tragedy. When at a much

more advanced period of my life I had many opportunities of being in Italy, and once travelled a good deal through Greece, I found it again and again borne in upon me that I owed much of my intense interest in the monuments and the memories of these regions to the early influence of Mr. Goulding's teaching, and to the manner in which he was able to illustrate every subject and bring it home to my intelligence and my heart. I do not venture to say that Mr. Goulding's method of teaching was directly adapted to create a thoroughly scholastic knowledge of Greek and Latin, and I do not know whether his pupils would have been likely by means of his instruction alone to take high honours in any university competition, but I know that it made all of us who had a taste for such study ready and fluent readers in Greek and Latin and as familiar with most of the Greek and Latin poets as with Shakespeare and Keats. It was in truth literary rather than scholastic instruction; but as such it suited me and most of my comrades quite well enough, and I think was something which did high credit to a small school in an Irish provincial city.

Mr. Goulding made each of his boys keep a short diary, which was to tell of any book he had read out of school and give some account of the impression it had made on him. Every day as each class was called up according to its order of study, the business began by the reading of these diaries.

Each boy in the class read his diary, and then the teacher started some conversation as to the book or books we had read. Mr. Goulding invited the questions and comments of the boys and asked questions and made comments of his own, and there was generally very instructive talk over the subjects which thus came successively under notice. The object of the teacher was to find out how far the boys had got in their understanding and appreciation of the authors they had been reading, and to excite an inspiring rivalry among them in these literary avocations. Sometimes the books were Latin, sometimes but not so often Greek, occasionally French, and very frequently English. Again and again we were much surprised at the power of memory Mr. Goulding displayed and at the accuracy of his knowledge with regard to the precise wording of some of the passages read to him. A boy, for example, had set down in his diary a citation from some author which had given him particular delight, and almost every day it happened that Mr. Goulding was able to correct from his own recollection some inaccuracy in the copying of the quotation. It was my own ill luck on one occasion to record in my diary some lines of Gray's immortal "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," telling how knowledge to the eyes of many "her ample page, rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll" and how "Chill penury repressed their noble rage"—and then I am sorry

to say that I finished my attempt at quotation with the words "and curbed the genial current of the soul." Mr. Goulding asked me with delightful gravity, whether I thought Gray was quite happy in his metaphor when he spoke of curbing the genial current of the soul, and whether I did not think that "froze the genial current of the soul" would have been a better way of expressing the idea. Of course I saw instantly the mistake I had made, and the laughter of my young friends added to my humiliation. Then, to adopt the familiar newspaper phrase of to-day, the incident was allowed to drop and we had an interesting talk over the Elegy itself, and the general meaning and use of metaphors.

Now I am not citing as an instance of remarkable memory the fact that our teacher was able to correct at once so absurd a mistake in lines familiar to every lover of English literature; but I mention the correction merely because it illustrates his manner of teaching. The result of my mistake was to give occasion for a discussion that quickened the perceptions and expanded the knowledge of those who listened to it and took part in it. I feel sure that I thus became the undeserving occasion of an insight into the meaning and value of metaphor which was never likely to be lost on the minds of my young class-fellows. I do not think any of us from that time forth ever failed to understand the use and the meaning of metaphor,

although in the ordinary way of school-teaching we might have learnt the word from a dictionary without having the faintest comprehension of its meaning. To get at our minds and our intelligences was always the great object of our teacher, and to give us a new idea was of more account to him than to cram us with any number of equally parroted names and dates and citations. Mr. Goulding loved light literature, and, unlike many solemn provincial teachers of his time, was ever ready to encourage his pupils in the reading of fiction, provided always that the fiction was wholesome in its general effect. He delighted in the novels of Scott and of Dickens, and Dickens was then but a newcomer in English literature who had not yet won his full recognition among the more serious order of school-teachers. Mr. Goulding knew that boys will be boys, and he liked them to be boyish in the true sense.

I remained a pupil at Mr. Goulding's school until it became necessary that I should begin to make a living for myself, and, as I have already said, it was my father's desire as well as my own that I should begin to study for the law. An opportunity was given to me by a kindly friend of our family, a lawyer in large practice, who allowed me to study in his chambers without having to pay any fee for my legal education. I shall never forget the day of my leaving Mr. Goulding's school, and the kindly words of encouragement and

sympathy he gave to me on my entrance into the world of actual business. I did not quite understand at the time, although I came to understand it well afterwards, how thoroughly he appreciated the difficulties which stood in the way of my admission to the profession of the law. Even at the time, however, I could see that Mr. Goulding had some doubts as to the possibility of my becoming a regular student of law, and thus obtaining entrance to the bar. Mr. Goulding knew well, much better than I did then, that there was little probability of my being able to keep to any study not bringing in some regular and immediate remuneration, or of my family being able to pay the large fees which were then an indispensable preliminary condition of admission to the legal profession. There was therefore a certain melancholy tone in his words as he spoke of my immediate prospects; but he encouraged and stimulated me to make the very best of the favourable opportunity thus presented to me, and he assured me again and again of his confidence that I would never give up altogether the literary studies for which he believed me to have some natural inclination, or allow what I had learned of Greek and Roman letters to lose its influence over my mind and my ways of life.

I took leave of Mr. Goulding and his school with the deepest regret. I saw him often afterwards. He was a frequent visitor at our home, and his

friendship was never lessened by any of the worldly troubles which soon came upon us. He knew before I did that I should have to encounter a youth of hard work and of struggle against poverty, and it was this knowledge which gave to our farewell talk, as I left his school, the melancholy tone I was not then quite able to understand. He passed away from life not many years after our separation, but he never passed out of my recollection, and it is no excess of words to say that his memory and his influence are with me still. I think John Goulding was in his quiet and modest way one of the most remarkable men I have ever known. He was certainly the most remarkable man I have ever known who actually came to nothing so far as worldly success was concerned. I have not met any man who, on the whole, could give evidence of a larger amount of intellectual accomplishment. He had some knowledge of the literature of all European countries, ancient and modern, and he could talk about Scandinavian poets and Russian theorists as well as of the Greeks and the Romans, the English and the French. What little I have seen of his original writing seems to me to give proof of genuine literary capacity, and yet he never even tried to write a book or sent contributions to any literary periodical of established position. I suppose it may be taken for granted that if he had possessed a really creative faculty for literature, his capacity would have forced itself into

recognition, and he would have done something to make his name known. He was in any case a man singularly devoid of all ambition for personal advancement, and from many casual scraps of conversation I came somehow to the conclusion that he had probably measured his own faculties with a cool and steady judgment, did not find that he had the literary qualities which could make for him a genuine success, and did not care to interfere with his own regular way of life and the calling to which he was devoted for the mere sake of taking a part in the every-day work of literature. With all the sweetness and brightness of his temperament, his keen humour, and the pleasure he took in congenial companionship, it seemed to me that there was ever a prevailing tone of melancholy in his life, and I have often been led to the belief that some profound disappointment must have come upon his earlier career. This idea impressed me so much that when in the novel I have already mentioned I put my memories of him into the form of one of my characters, I told my readers that he had in his early life loved deeply and loved in vain, and had therefore settled down to a quiet career of resignation and steady benevolent work. But I have never known or heard anything about Mr. Goulding warranting such an assumption, and I only mention the literary liberty I took with his memory as illustrating the kind of impression he had made upon my mind. There are few men with

whom I have ever been brought into companionship to whom I owe a higher debt of gratitude than that which I acknowledge to my one schoolmaster, and can only thus repay.

CHAPTER III

FATHER MATHEW

Among the literary and educational institutions of Cork city at that time which had influence upon the boys and young men whom I knew, one of the most influential and successful was the Temperance Institute, founded and maintained by Father Mathew. The Temperance Institute consisted chiefly of a large hall, a library, and rooms for reading and writing, and it was used especially as a place of evening resort for those who followed the leadership of Father Mathew in the teetotal movement. The object of the noble-minded Father Mathew was to establish an institution in which young men and boys might pass their evenings and devote themselves to reading, study, and the intelligent interchange of ideas. Its members, however, were not exclusively of junior years; for it was the especial wish of Father Mathew that the seniors should also devote as much of their leisure time as they could to the rooms of the Institute, and should have the opportunity of encouraging their juniors in their studies and pursuits. The centre hall of the Institute was spacious, handsome, and well appointed, and was used on certain

evenings in every week for the delivery of lectures and for the discussions of a debating society. The young men with whom I was chiefly associated were usually working hard at schools or in offices or warehouses or shops all day long, and it was Father Mathew's object to provide them with a place where they might spend their evenings agreeably and instructively. Most of the younger members of the Institute were coming to that time of life when the temptations of the outer world are most seductive and most full of danger. No one needs to be told that there is no temptation more perilous for young fellows in a city than the absence of any opportunity for occupying their leisure hours and being left in constant puzzlement as to what to do with themselves in the long evenings.

The library of the Temperance Institute was of considerable size, and contained really a very liberal and well-chosen assortment of cyclopædias, histories, books of elementary science, memoirs of eminent men, globes terrestrial and celestial, and many maps. The elders came amongst us a great deal and talked with us, helped us with our readings, and gave us all the information we sought of them; but it was Father Mathew's especial wish that they should not seem to press any studies upon us or act as if they were set over us like intellectual drillmasters. Father Mathew had a strong confidence in the common desire of young men

and boys to cultivate their natural intelligence when the opportunity was placed easily within their reach, and he quite understood that the presence of the perpetual schoolmaster, professional or otherwise, would not be likely to advance that end in an institution designed in the first instance for rest and recreation. He visited the Institute very often himself and talked with its members, always in the friendliest and easiest way, and entered thoroughly into all the ideas and pursuits of the young. The Institute was well supplied with newspapers and magazines, and I well remember that it was there I first made the acquaintance of "Punch," which was then still in its earlier years. There used to be lectures given occasionally, or essays read by members of the Institute, chiefly, however, by the younger members, because it was Father Mathew's wish that these should be encouraged from the very first to develop whatever literary gifts they had, and not to regard themselves merely as pupils brought together to be lectured by their elders and superiors. When the hero of the evening had read his essay or delivered his speech, it was then the custom for the members generally to raise a discussion on some subject which it brought into notice. In these debates the elders were quite free to bear a part, and indeed I have heard Father Mathew himself offer his own spontaneous contribution to the evening's controversy.

The Apostle of Temperance was a man of a striking and even a commanding presence. He was not very tall, but he was of shapely form, and his head and face had something statuesque in their mould. We used to say in the Institute in those days that Father Mathew had a head which seemed like that of a Roman senator, and I can well imagine that head surmounting some classic statue. His order of mind was not intellectual in the higher sense of the word, but he was endowed with a clear and vigorous common sense, and with a wealth of sympathy and a love for the human race which was ever at the service of his fellow men. He was not eloquent as a speaker either in the pulpit or on the platform, and he never made any attempt at rhetorical effect, but he had the inspiration which made his simplest words sink deeply into the heart; and if he never spoke a brilliant sentence, so also he never uttered an unmeaning commonplace. He had the rare and happy faculty of at once touching the hearts and quickening the understandings of those with whom he held converse. Whether he talked to a peasant on the roadside, or a little boy in a school, or a vast assemblage from a public platform, it was certain that the full meaning of every sentence he spoke would reach its mark at once. I have often thought in later years that in the simplicity of his nature and the straightforward integrity of his purposes Father Mathew greatly resembled John Bright,

although of course the Apostle of Temperance had not the gift of eloquence which belonged to the great English orator. Thackeray in his "Irish Sketch Book" makes mention of having several times met Father Mathew in Ireland, and appears to have been greatly charmed by the sweet simplicity of his manners. Thackeray took particular notice of the fact that when he met Father Mathew at a private dinner-party, the Apostle of Temperance always found occasion to exchange a friendly grasp of the hand and a few genial words with the butler or the footmen, to make benevolent inquiries of them concerning their wives and children, and to show a kindly acquaintance with their domestic affairs.

My own knowledge of Father Mathew was close and intimate for many years. I was little more than a child when I accepted from him the temperance pledge and was invested with his own silver medal, the badge of the order. I was a frequent visitor at his house, and he often came to see my father and mother. He was ever ready to lend a helping hand by advice or personal intervention when a friend was involved in any sort of difficulty, and in the houses of the very poorest it was noticed that whenever serious trouble came on, Father Mathew was sure to appear like a protecting angel. With all his horror of drunkenness, with his lifelong devotion to the cause of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, Father

Mathew had a never-failing patience with and pity for the drunkard. No matter how often an unhappy man might have broken his pledge and gone back to his evil habits, Father Mathew was ever ready with forgiveness and renewed hope, never despairing of the weakling's possible redemption. He had no words of reproach or even of stern condemnation for the sinner who had fallen back into sin, but only spoke in language of tender remonstrance and of sweet encouragement to renewed and happier effort. It was this very attribute of unfailing sympathy and sweetness that made Father Mathew's influence all but magical over those with whom he had any influence whatever.

The Temperance Institute was but a type of the organization which Father Mathew formed and kept going in every division of the city, which spread itself, in fact, all over the country and into every other country where Father Mathew's influence prevailed. The poorest regions of Cork city had their local temperance societies and halls and temperance bands. All that kind of organization which was adopted afterwards by Cardinal Manning for the spread of the total abstinence doctrine, and by General Booth for the work of the Salvation Army, was anticipated by Father Mathew and watched over carefully and closely by him. The smallest and the poorest of these temperance halls provided a place where the young could have fre-

quent meetings, could listen to instructive discourses, could have their tea-parties and even their dances. Father Mathew was a full believer in the importance of securing for the young ample opportunities of harmless amusement, and he was never more happy himself than when he saw a number of young people made happy in this innocent and wholesome way. There used to be great temperance meetings held in various open spaces within and around the city and in country districts everywhere. There were long processions on the occasion of these meetings; the processions were led by bands of music; and each organization bore the distinctive name of its locality. One natural result of this was that there grew up a keen and commendable competition amongst the different temperance societies for the display of their numbers and their discipline, and for the reward of a smile and a word of praise from the apostle himself. The whole population caught fire from the enthusiasm of each central body, and a village would have felt ashamed of itself if it could not establish a temperance hall and marshal a temperance band. Nothing within my recollection was more wonderful and more nearly complete than the success of Father Mathew's temperance movement. It pervaded every town and village throughout the whole island, spread itself with marvellous rapidity all over England and Scotland and Wales, and worked

its way across the Atlantic wherever Irishmen were settled in the United States and Canada. Its effect upon the habits of the people soon became evident even to the most superficial observation. A large proportion of the population utterly foreswore drunkenness and all manner of intoxicating drink, and I am firmly convinced that the influence of Father Mathew's movement has never ceased from that time to this to exercise its wholesome power over the people of Ireland.

We had, however, some little troubles, by the way, in our Cork Temperance Institute. That Institute was supported by a large number of citizens who held a certain position in Cork, and who made it their habit to spend some time there of an evening for the purpose of talking with the young fellows and helping them with their literary arrangements. The Institute was so constituted as to have a president of its own, whom the members were to elect from time to time, for Father Mathew was the president of the whole temperance organization and not of the comparatively small society which met in the Temperance Institute. The only trouble the Institute had in my time arose because of the vagaries of its first president. This president was a Cork man by birth, who had studied for the bar and been admitted to practice. His name was one which afterwards became well known to the general public of England and to the public of many countries out-

side England, for it was Edward Vaughan Hyde Kenealy. Edward Kenealy was undoubtedly a man of brilliant talents. He had cultivated many fields or at least gardens of literature, and he had acquired a knowledge of Latin and Greek which perfectly dazzled us youngsters who were then trying hard to make good way with our classical studies. He wrote showy verses, and indeed ventured on poetic drama, and was fascinating and forcible as a public speaker. One of his humorous literary achievements was to take some comical Irish ballad, like that, for instance, then known as "Brian O'Linn," and turn it into what we boys thought a perfect reproduction in Aristophanic Greek. He was an advocate of teetotalism, and took a leading part in the organizing of the Temperance Institute. He was therefore elected its first president, and delivered an address in the Institute hall which seemed to me, and I believe to all the young men who heard it, a perfect masterpiece of eloquence and imagination.

After that opening night Kenealy was in the habit of visiting the Institute very often of evenings, and got into the way of talking to us and giving us his advice about our studies and our amusements. Personally, I had but little intercourse with him because I was one of the youngest among the boys and for the most part escaped his notice. But I soon began to hear murmurings among some of the older boys, and afterwards

among the mature men who frequented the Institute, as to the kind of influence Kenealy was endeavouring to exercise. I had but vague ideas at the time as to what it was all about, but so far as I could learn, our distinguished president was somewhat cynical and scoffing in his mode of discourse, and was inclined to turn into ridicule many subjects which the members of the Institute and all good citizens were taught to hold especially sacred. Many of the elders in the Institute began to regard Kenealy's influence as decidedly unedifying, and as precisely the sort of influence which Father Mathew would most have wished to banish from any association under his control. The result of all this was that among the older members, independently of any feeling that might have been in Father Mathew's own mind, there grew up a strong determination that some effort must be made to relieve the Institute from the presidency and the influence of Kenealy. After many murmurings had been heard, a general meeting of the Institute was convened, at which Father Mathew was invited to be present, and there one of the most influential members brought forward a motion, amounting in substance to a vote of censure on Kenealy and a demand for his resignation of the office he held. I should say, perhaps, that the members of the Institute were not all Catholics, and that amongst the seniors a very considerable portion belonged to the Protestant Church and

to Protestant dissenting denominations. The man who proposed the vote against Kenealy was a leading member of the Unitarian body. Father Mathew always took care to make it thoroughly understood that he welcomed the members of all religious creeds to the fellowship of his temperance organization, and he had a great regard for the Unitarians, who, though they differed more widely from him in faith than any others who belonged to Protestant denominations, were always conspicuous for their devotion to any cause concerning itself with the improvement of the moral life of the population. I can remember Father Mathew once saying to me of the Cork Unitarians that "they are good men, they are noble-minded men, they help us in every work for the moral benefit of their neighbours, and I am only sorry that they cannot be with us altogether." There was a long debate on the vote of censure, as I may call it, to which we the juniors were allowed to listen, although I presume we had not the right to exercise a vote on the question. Kenealy defended himself in a long and eloquent speech in which he seemed to throw himself altogether on the consideration of the members, and he made a very touching appeal that he, then a young man, as he certainly was, whose whole career depended on his character and his credit, should not be harshly judged and sent forth to the world with a slur upon his reputation. Father Mathew relieved

the Institute from the necessity of coming to any decision by accomplishing a sort of mild and merciful coup d'état. We youngsters were not much consulted by our elders on the whole subject, but the general impression was that Father Mathew was unwilling to inflict on Kenealy the disgrace of a downright vote of censure, which would certainly have been carried by a very large majority if the question had come to such a test. He declared that as he had formed the association he had a right to dissolve it, and accordingly he announced its dissolution, with the hope and promise that it should soon be called into being once again under conditions more favourable to a long and beneficent vitality. So the Institute was dissolved for the time and was soon recalled to existence, and on this renewal of its life Kenealy did not offer himself for election as one of its members. With this remarkable exception the Institute became just what it had been before and went its useful way.

Kenealy's restless temperament brought him into other troubles not long after, but he soon left the country and settled in England, where he followed his career at the English bar, to which he had been admitted. He once offered himself as a candidate for the representation of Cork city in the House of Commons, and he came over to Cork to advocate his claims in person. I was at that time a member of the reporting staff of the

"Cork Examiner," and I attended several of Kenealy's meetings and had many talks with him. He was a fascinating talker as well as a brilliant public speaker, and he seemed to have an unlimited faith in his own capacity and his own future. He had not a chance, however, of being elected to represent his native city, and the constituency in general passed over his claims with absolute indifference. He issued a parting address to the people of Cork, in the closing passage of which he declared that "in the foreign country where my lot has been cast I never have ceased and never shall cease to think of you," and expressed a hope that he might always be remembered by them with kindly recollection and genial wishes. After that time I never met him until we came together in a division lobby of the House of Commons after he had been elected as representative of Stoke-upon-Trent and I had taken my seat as one of the members for the county of Longford in Ireland. His public career was well known, rather too well known, for a long time to the people of these countries. He took a prominent part as the advocate of the once famous Roger Tichborne; he started a weekly newspaper which he described as "edited by Kenealy"; he got into trouble with the leaders of his profession, and was the object of more than one sharp personal denunciation in the House of Commons. He was unquestionably a man of remarkable and varied ability, and if he

had been endowed with higher principles and with steadier purpose, he might have made for himself an honourable reputation in literature, or at the bar, or in the House of Commons. As it was, he became but the comet of a season, and a comet of somewhat lurid and fitful light.

CHAPTER IV

MY EARLY FRIENDS

I ALWAYS have been, so far as my recollection can tell me, and I always shall be, so far as my hope and trust can assure me, a lover of books. My memory does not go back to a time when I did not love to get a book into my hands and turn over its pages, and I can safely say that this inclination of mine was in working force even before I was quite able to read the printed words on the pages. We were a reading family, and we lived among a reading set. I have never been in any social circle on this side of the Atlantic or the other where a greater love for literature and art prevailed than was to be found among those with whom I chiefly associated during the twenty years or so of my unbroken residence in Cork city. The Cork people were intense lovers of music, and some of us whose taste inclined rather to literature or to pictorial art used to grumble now and then because of the supremacy which the majority of our population gave to the craft of the musician. "The fact is, we are drenched with music in Cork," was the discontented utterance of a young friend of mine who believed he had a gift

for literary composition, but did not succeed in attracting large audiences to listen to his essays in one of our literary societies. But we were undoubtedly great lovers of painting and sculpture, and we had in our Royal Cork Institution a remarkably fine gallery filled with casts of the great masterpieces given to the world by the hand of the sculptor. Nor am I inclined to admit that we thought less of literature than of any of its kindred arts, and indeed the dream of most of the young men I then knew was the dream of successful authorship. My recollection of talks about books goes back as far as my recollection of talks about marbles or hoops or paddling in the river.

An event of moment in my life was my first making the acquaintance of Shakespeare, or perhaps I should rather say of Othello. My father, who had a good library of his own, had a strong objection to the study of what I may call grown-up authors, like Shakespeare for instance, by my sister and brother and me. He had a theory that such authors were apt to do harm to the very young by suggesting subjects concerning which nothing ought to be known until a later period of life. He appears to have been under the impression that if you could keep such books from the sight of the young, the young could never learn anything about the objectionable subjects from their daily intercourse with human beings. Therefore a volume of Shakespeare never came in our way, but

we were allowed to study, if we felt so inclined, the little book, Dodd's "Beauties of Shakespeare." I wonder whether many English homes now contain a copy of the Rev. Dr. William Dodd's "Beauties of Shakespeare"! This volume was made up of short passages taken from the plays, and of course free from all lines or words which could suggest unwholesome ideas to the mind of childhood, but at the same time separating each passage from any connection with the story of the play. Dodd's book was in fact a very useful and welcome pocket companion for one who already knew the plays of Shakespeare well, but was glad to have at hand a means of frequent reference to the author's thoughts and words.

I must confess that I cared nothing whatever about Dodd's "Beauties of Shakespeare." I was only in the age for listening to and telling stories, and the exquisite beauty of these isolated passages from Shakespeare failed to make any impression on my little mind. But it so happened that among a pile of old paper-bound pamphlets and other such booklets one day I came upon a separate copy of "Othello." It was a small book with a blue paper cover and having an old-fashioned steel engraving as its frontispiece. The engraving represented as its principal figure Othello on his landing in Cyprus — a black man in a corselet of mail and girt with a sword. That was enough for me. The black, mail-clad man with the sword excited

at once my ardent curiosity, and I carried off the little volume to my bedroom and there studied the tragedy of "Othello" from beginning to end. The edition was not intended for the use of children and had undergone no process of expurgation, but I can positively say that it excited no unwholesome curiosity or unhealthy feeling of any kind in me, and that I was wholly absorbed in the tragic beauty of the story, in the noble character of Othello, and in the exquisite loveliness and the devoted nature of Desdemona. Never, to the end of my life, can I forget the impression made upon me by the first reading of that little book. Through it I entered into the world of poetry and of imagination — the world of Shakespeare. For a considerable time, however, I knew no play of Shakespeare but "Othello." In the mean time I became acquainted with the "Arabian Nights," in the once familiar old version translated from the French of M. Galland and rendered what was considered suitable for family reading, and the memories of that land of mystery and magic have haunted me throughout my life. I am afraid that even the masterly and perfect translation by my old friend Sir Richard Burton could not give to my mature years the same fresh delight that my early boyhood found in the cheap edition put into unscholarly English which was my first introduction to the realms of the Sultan and the Genie and the fairy, of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp and the

marvellous horse of brass. Curiously enough, my third love in literature was "Robinson Crusoe," which might have seemed comparatively commonplace and prosaic after the "Arabian Nights"—and then came Walter Scott's novels, and so on into an ever expanding world of fiction.

The novels of Alexandre Dumas the elder had an immense fascination for many of us youths in Cork. The Count of Monte Cristo became our favourite hero. Some of us did our fond best to model ourselves after the fashion of Monte Cristo as he appeared when he returned to the living world of Paris after his long imprisonment and his strange adventures in foreign lands. We should have been only too glad if we could have made ourselves in any way like him while he was passing through these mysterious adventures; but as we could not even in our own minds imagine ourselves as partakers of such experiences, we found that the best we could do was to imitate him as far as practicable in his dress and deportment during the later years of his story. Monte Cristo, for instance, never lowered his heroic dignity to the commonplace and trivial enjoyment of the dance, and a few of us after we had made his acquaintance believed that we were doing something towards our transformation into heroes of romance when we announced our resolve to take no part in the frivolities of the ballroom. Again, the Count of Monte Cristo when he appeared in even-

ing dress always wore a white waistcoat and had his watch suspended by a single narrow thread of gold chain. So far, at least, it was easy for us to imitate our model, and with our white waistcoats and our thread of gold we were able to fancy ourselves Monte Cristo to the life. After all, we were no worse but in many ways much better than the youths of an elder era, who believed that they were doing something very fine when they tried to get up their dress and their deportment after the fashion adopted by the Prince Regent who became George the Fourth.

We had keen rivalries in our literary societies and in our debates at the Temperance Institute. Among my companions of those days were some who afterwards made themselves conspicuous and won a name in the serious struggles of life. One of these was the late Sir John Pope Hennessy, who entered the House of Commons very young, soon became an especial favourite and protégé of Mr. Disraeli, was afterwards appointed to several high positions in the Colonial service of the Government, went through some years of important work as Governor of Hong Kong, became the hero of many fierce controversies, and, towards the close of his life, gave up the Colonial service and returned to the House of Commons as one of the champions of Home Rule for Ireland. During the long number of years which passed between my early friendship with Hennessy in Cork and our sitting side

by side in the House of Commons as brother members of the Irish National Party, there intervened the greater part of a lifetime for both of us. In his closing years he spent much money in acquiring the ownership of a castle and a fine demesne within sight of Cork harbour, a demesne in the grounds of which he and I had often wandered as boys at a time when he could have had little hope indeed of ever becoming the owner of the place. He did not long survive his return to parliamentary life. We used to meet incessantly in his later London days, and I have never known a more delightful companion. He was a brilliant talker, was gifted with high animal spirits which never flagged to the very last, and he was rich in anecdotes of his observations and his experiences in various parts of the world.

There were some others of my early Cork associates the story of whose lives recalls to me more tragic memories. I remember one young fellow named Maxwell Sullivan, the son of a retired military officer, Captain Sullivan. Captain Sullivan had seen much service abroad, and was the only man I knew at that time who had actually fought a duel and wounded his man. When I knew him he was a delightful old gentleman — we thought him very old at that time, although as his eldest son was still but a very young man he could hardly have been regarded as a type of extreme antiquity. Captain Sullivan was one of the elders who took a deep in-

terest in the Temperance Institute. He came there night after night to talk with the boys, to help to form their manners, to guide their studies, and to tell them animated stories about all that he had seen and done during the course of his more active life. He was always very gracious to us boys, although there was a certain air of dictatorship about him which kept us on our good behaviour when he condescended to mingle in our society. He was rigorous in the exercise of his rule as to our manners and our behaviour, and criticised our efforts at literary debate with a certain outspoken severity. Maxwell Sullivan was one of his younger sons, and I well remember the impression Captain Sullivan once produced while Maxwell was endeavouring to distinguish himself in a debate. Maxwell was rushing at his subject with an earnest volubility which somewhat affected his utterance, when his father from his seat in the hall suddenly called out the admonition — "Speak slowly, sir, and distinctly, and then we may have some chance of understanding what you are trying to say."

Poor Maxwell Sullivan, who was full of energy, courage, and love of adventure, afterwards went out to the United States and served on the side of the North in the great American Civil War. He lost his life there, although not in actual battle, yet as the result of battle and on the very field of fight. He had taken part in many engagements, and, having been wounded in one of them, he was borne by

comrades to a tent and left there to rest, with the hope that he might recover from the effects of his injuries. But through some disaster or other, as I have been told, the tent a night or two after caught fire, and before the wounded man could be rescued from the danger, he had suffered such harm that his brave life came to an end. It would better have suited his gallant spirit to meet with death in the actual fight, but he had none the less died for the cause to which he had devoted himself. He was not, indeed, the only one of my friends in boyish days whose career came to an end on one of those American battlefields either on the side of the North or on the side of the South. Some of my early friends of those days became victims, too, in other fields of war. I had a cousin, Thomas Wallis, who with his two brothers and his sister were among my close associates during all my earlier years. Their home was by the Blackwater, among the scenes which Spenser has made immortal in poetry, and there I spent many holidays, and first learned from Tom and his brothers how to swim and how to ride, and how to get the best I could out of life in the open air. Tom Wallis studied for the bar and was actually called, but had no taste for the legal profession; he married early, and was early left a widower, and afterwards obtained a commission in the army, and prematurely closed his military career as one of the first victims of the fatal fire on the boats at Cawnpore.

Other friends of mine in those early days made themselves conspicuous afterwards in more peaceful fields of competition. While I was a member of the House of Commons I used to meet very often there on the benches and in the division lobby with a friend and namesake of mine, the late John George MacCarthy, who made for himself a distinguished position in Parliament by his eloquence as a debater and his intimate knowledge of all subjects which concerned the interests of his native country.

My oldest and dearest friend in life — he has but lately passed out of life — was Thomas Crosbie, who in his early years became a reporter on the staff of the "Cork Examiner," and by his great capacity and steadfastness worked his way to the editorship of the paper, and finally succeeded John Francis Maguire as its proprietor. Thomas Crosbie was during his later years one of the most honoured and distinguished citizens of his native Cork. He raised the influence and the reputation of his journal even higher than these had ever been before, and he will always be remembered as a leading spirit in every movement which tended to increase the prosperity of his country. He might have been elected to Parliament at any time if he would only have consented to become a candidate for a seat in the House of Commons. But he was always a man of retiring disposition, and he would not accept any public career or appoint-

ment. The only office of any kind which I ever knew of his accepting was that of President of the Institute of British Journalists. The office, I believe, is held but for one year, and Thomas Crosbie accepted the distinction when it was offered to him. The Institute held its annual meeting during Crosbie's term at Buda-Pesth in Hungary, and Crosbie had the honour of presiding over its proceedings in one of the world's most picturesque cities. Tom Crosbie and I were friends from the time when we met as small boys at the English school — I mean the school for English and not classical teaching — where, as I said before, I learned nothing. He preceded me as a worker in a lawyer's office, the same office as that in which I made my uncompleted experiment in qualifying for the legal profession. Later still he joined the staff of the "Cork Examiner," and there we were again for a while fellow workers. During all these years I can safely say that we spent the whole of our leisure hours in close companionship. We rambled together in the country, we made part of the same boating and yachting expeditions and of the same swimming matches, we belonged to the same literary societies, and when we were not otherwise engaged, Tom Crosbie spent all his evenings in my home.

The time came when we ceased to be close companions, for he remained always a resident of our native city after I had gone to seek my fortune

in Liverpool or in London, but we continued to meet at every possible opportunity in Cork or in Liverpool or in London. On the occasion of his return from presiding over the Institute of Journalists in Buda-Pesth, there was a public dinner given by a great literary society in London, at which Crosbie and I both made speeches. He was then, as always before, especially happy in the gift of humorous eloquence. I have heard a great many humorous speakers in England, and still more successful masters of the art in the United States, but I never heard any one who could deliver, on the spur of the moment, a short speech more rich in wit and humour than those I have heard many a time from my dear old friend Tom Crosbie. The curious fact is that he was not and never attempted to be an orator in the fuller sense of the word. He never made any effort at the delivery of a speech which displayed splendid language, picturesque imagery, or passionate declamation. Indeed, he had no inclination whatever for the making of speeches, and hardly, so far as I know, addressed a great meeting from a public platform. But the vein of rich, delightful, native humour always found in his private conversation served him in good stead when he had to make a short extemporaneous speech like that delivered by him at the literary dinner to which I have just made allusion. If he had had ambition, I am quite certain that Thomas Crosbie might have

risen to hold a high place in the public life of his country. But he loved his quiet pursuits, his reading of books, his genial hours of association with his friends, and the daily work of his newspaper had become the main occupation of his career. Under these conditions, however, he rose to as high a place as came within his reach, — rose to it slowly, quietly, and without effort, — and he has left behind him a name honoured in the community to which he belonged and in the country to which he was devoted with the soul of a genuine patriot. He was a wonderfully well read man, and he and I for a great many years studied the same books and took delight in the interchange of ideas about them. We read Homer and Virgil, Aristophanes and Plautus, Molière and Voltaire, Shakespeare and Massinger, Goethe and Schiller, Dickens and Thackeray, and most of the Italian poets. By a strange stroke of fate Crosbie died at a time some years ago while I was still weak from the effects of the great sickness of my life thus far — a sickness which seemed all but certain to bring that life to a close. My family and friends by a pious fraud kept me from all knowledge of Tom Crosbie's illness, and I was not allowed to know until long after my recovery that my more than brother had gone to his grave. I have never looked upon that grave, and my friend still lives in my memory and my heart.

I had always a strong desire, as I suppose most

young men have, to travel in foreign countries, and I had also a distinct ambition to make for myself a literary career in England. This ambition was much quickened by the hard conditions which now surrounded me in life. The support of a family depended on my exertions at a very early period, and I began to think that for the mere sake of making a comfortable living I should have to seek for literary occupation in London. In any case I should have had a great desire to try my chances in London, for London was to me a kind of fairy-ground, to which my love of English literature drew me with an almost romantic longing. I longed to become familiar with the London of Shakespeare, with the London of Prince Hal and Falstaff, of Addison's "Spectator," of Byron and Dickens and Thackeray. I was always planning some visit to London, but I had to put off the realization of this dream from time to time for the hard practical reason that I could not then spare the leisure or the money for any such adventurous expedition. I delighted in reading about Westminster Abbey, and the monuments of Fox and Pitt, and I sometimes thought that my highest desire in life would be gratified if I could only hear a great debate in the House of Commons. I am afraid I sometimes pestered with questions any one of my friends who, like John Francis Maguire, could tell me all about the House and its ways and its orators. There was a

neighbour of ours in Cork, a most commonplace personage indeed, in whom I began to take a deep interest for the mere reason that he had in his earlier life been occupied for several years in London. He could not be brought to regard London in any sense from my romantic and glorifying point of view, and gave me only the most prosaic and unpicturesque details of his experience in the great metropolis. Still it was something to know a man who had lived some years in London, and who could at least tell me that he had seen the Houses of Parliament and other places made dear to me by history and poetry and fiction. I remember that on one occasion he was telling me about the city and the Thames, and he happened to mention a departure he had made in a boat from Wapping Old Stairs. This was enough to quicken my eager fancy, for I loved the once famous ballad about Wapping Old Stairs, and I thought that if I could only look upon that spot it would do something to gratify my ambition. But when he spoke casually of the Temple Gardens, I began to regard him with blended admiration and envy. The Temple Gardens, — where the red and white roses were plucked, where Addison and Steele had wandered, which were familiar to Dr. Johnson, which had been pictured in so many poems and romances, — what would I not have given for a sight of that hallowed enclosure! My brother and I used to rhapsodize to each other about

London and a London literary life, and I used to pour out to my sister my dreams of the time when I should be settled in London and should bring my mother and her over to share my home and success there. But in the mean time I had to work hard for a living, and the daily work of a provincial newspaper does not lend itself much to the encouragement of romantic imaginings. I had become at last somewhat of a proficient in shorthand. I used to attend the local police courts and the public meetings of the local municipal bodies, and the Courts of Assize when these came to be held, and I was allowed by a gracious and kindly editor to publish some stray poems of mine in the columns of the newspaper. I shall never forget the raptures of my sister and myself when one of those poems attracted the attention of the editor of a Dublin magazine and procured for me an invitation to contribute to the pages of a periodical holding high literary distinction and published far away in Ireland's capital city.

CHAPTER V

YOUNG IRELAND

My work as a journalist began under depressing and inauspicious conditions. I had not long been engaged as a reporter on the "Cork Examiner" when the earliest evidences of the great coming famine cast their gloom over the land. The first work of any importance I had to undertake was to act as one of the reporters who were sent into different parts of the country as "special correspondents" to describe the devastating effects of the failure of the potato crop. It is hardly necessary to say that in those days the great majority of the working population of Ireland were living almost exclusively on the potato, and the sudden failure of the crop paralyzed all the efforts of the Irish government and the local authorities to resist the encroachments of the famine. It is no part of my intention to attempt a history of those famine months, which have found ample and abiding record in many carefully compiled volumes. I saw enough for myself to cast a gloom over my memory, which even at the present moment cannot be recalled without a thrill of pain. It was a common sight to see men and women, during

that ghastly winter, lie down in the streets of the country towns, and die of actual starvation. The parochial and charitable institutions proved wholly inadequate to grapple with this invasion of hunger, and the burial-grounds themselves in some places were unable to find space for the coffins of the newly dead. In some parts of the south and west of Ireland, the coffins had to do double and treble duty. A coffin was made with one of its sides so adjusted as to be capable of easy removal. The dead body thus coffined was lowered into the grave, the coffin was then lifted up so that the corpse fell from its wooden shroud into the cold, soft bosom of Mother Earth, and the coffin was removed altogether and made to do duty for successive inanimate occupants.

The weather during that winter proved remarkably cold for Ireland, and in many parts of the south and west of the island the snow lay deep on the ground for days and days together. Some of the villages presented, under these conditions, the most ghastly sights that human imagination can picture. The unhappy creatures, men, women, and children, who were already sinking from hunger, had their dying agonies increased by the intensity of the cold, and by the drifts of snow which made their way into every miserable hovel whenever the door was open, or even through the chinks and fissures of the rotten and broken old doors when no wider opening was made for the admis-

sion of the snowy gusts. It must be owned that this was a trying time for a boy of sixteen to begin his work of descriptive reporting. I grew terribly familiar, in those days, with the frequent sight of death in some of its most heart-rending shapes. Again and again have I seen the corpse of some man, woman, or child, the victim of hunger and cold, with a face of greenish pallor, lying across the threshold of a cabin or on the pathway of some village street. The workhouses were crowded out of all proportion to their capacity for the reception of inmates, and the utmost efforts of active beneficence proved utterly unable to make head against the ever increasing spread of the famine.

It is only right to say that nothing was wanting which public and private beneficence could do to check the ravages of that terrible season. I can well remember the mingled sensations created by the sounding of joy bells from many steeples in the city of Cork, when the news went abroad that an American war frigate had come into the harbour heavily laden with food supplies wherewithal to resist the work of the famine. The mere thought that public rejoicing should have come to be associated with the arrival from across the Atlantic of donations of food for the starving poor whom the local authorities were not able to save from starvation, was of itself enough to fill the heart with a new and a keener sense of the misery surrounding us on all sides. Other countries followed the gen-

erous example of America. As a writer in one of the national newspapers said at the time, "Even the heart of the Turk at the far Dardanelles was touched, and he sent us in pity the alms of a beggar."

Owing to an extraordinary idea of political economy prevailing at the time among the governing authorities in Ireland, great supplies of wheat and flour were kept stored in some public buildings used as temporary granaries, lest if the whole supplies were poured out too lavishly, the result might be an undue interference with the possible profits of the private trader. In more than one instance it happened — it may have happened in many instances for aught I know, but I am only speaking of those which came within the range of my observation — that the food thus stored was badly packed, so that it actually rotted and had to be poured into the sea, while numbers were starving on the near shores who might have been kept alive if the grain and flour had been devoted in good time to their relief. To quote again from one of the national newspapers, it may truly be said that all through the south and west of Ireland there seemed to be "but one silent, vast dissolution." The people of the island underwent during these terrible months a sudden and immense reduction, from which it has never since recovered. With the famine, and after it, there set in that flood of emigration to the United States and Can-

ada, but more especially to the United States, which has gone on increasing in volume from that time to our own days.

One very natural result of the famine and its attendant horrors was to arouse among the Irish generally a feeling of intense hostility to British rule. It could not but become known all over the country that while English political and economical parties were contending against each other about theories and doctrines of political economy, an immense number of Irish men, women, and children were starving to death in their own miserable homes. The Free Traders, under the leadership of Cobden and Bright, and more lately of Sir Robert Peel, were doing their very best to have the ports opened to the admission of food supplies from all nations free of duty, but these efforts were resisted by the opponents of free trade, and in the mean time the people perished. Bright himself many years after, when describing the history of that period and eulogizing the noble efforts of his friend Cobden, declared that "famine itself, against which we had warred, joined us." The famine in Ireland actually enabled the Free Traders to carry their wise and generous policy to success; but in the mean time the famine was doing its own deadly work, and the Irish population only saw that they and theirs were the forlorn hope which had to be consigned to sacrifice during the struggle.

When the famine had done its worst, and there was time to think about something else than deaths from starvation, it soon became evident that among the majority of the Irish people the peaceful and constitutional policy of Daniel O'Connell had sunk into utter discredit. The famine in Ireland was the immediate cause of the triumphs secured by the advocates of free trade, but it was the immediate cause also of the Irish rebellion in 1848. The younger race of Irish nationalists had already broken away from O'Connell's leadership when he endeavoured to pledge them to a strictly peaceful and constitutional policy, and the mood of mind produced throughout the country by the ravages of the famine was naturally favourable to any incitement against the system of rule which was believed to be the main cause of the whole calamity. The Young Ireland party, the followers that is to say of the new group of national leaders, came into something like genuine power, and it would not have required a very far-seeing judgment to fill an observer just then with the conviction that an attempt at armed rebellion would be the next event in the national history.

I am not telling the story of that time except in so far as it bears upon my account of my own life and doings. In 1848 most of the young men whom I then knew and who were my daily associates had become members of the Young Ireland party. The great majority, indeed, of the younger

men all through the south and west and midlands of Ireland were in thorough sympathy with the purposes and the principles of that party, and the only difference of opinion among us was as to the possibility of success for any attempt at a national revolution. Knowing the strength of the British power, a large number of us still doubted the success of any such attempt; but the year was one of political convulsion all over Europe, and even the doubters among us could not but hope that something effective might be done by the help of foreign intervention. The armed movement, however, was precipitated by the sudden action of Smith O'Brien, the recognized leader of the party, against the wiser counsels of men like Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon, and precipitated also by the attempts of the government to disarm the whole country and reduce its manhood to helplessness. Thus was brought about the untimely and unprepared outbreak of rebellion which ended in the collapse at Ballingarry.

My first important work as a shorthand reporter was begun at the opening of the Special Commission held at Clonmel for the trial of Smith O'Brien, Thomas Francis Meagher, and two of their associates in the Ballingarry conflict. Smith O'Brien was a man of rank, descended from an Irish kingly house; and the head of his family was the Marquess of Thomond.

Meagher belonged to what is conventionally

described as the upper middle class, had received a high education, and might well have looked forward to a life of ease and luxury. He was the most brilliant speaker among the many brilliant speakers whom the Young Ireland movement was bringing into prominence. I had met him more than once in Cork before the outbreak of the rebellion, and on one occasion I was suddenly called upon to do a severe piece of professional work in consequence of a visit which he paid to the city. One evening, after the work of the day had been, as I supposed, quite finished, I was quietly reading at home when I was surprised by a visit from John Francis Maguire and Thomas Francis Meagher. Maguire told me hurriedly that Meagher was only passing through the city and had not intended to deliver any public address there; but that a great number of his local friends and admirers had got around him, and insisted that a public meeting must be hastily summoned, and that he must deliver a speech. The meeting had been summoned, and was to begin within half an hour of the time when my visitors came to my door; and their immediate purpose was to tell me that Maguire could find none other of his reporters near at hand, and that I must come and take a note of the whole speech, and write it out in time for publication in the next day's issue of the paper. Maguire's paper, the "Cork Examiner," was then published on three days of the week, — it had not yet become a

daily paper, — and Meagher's meeting was to be held and Meagher's speech was to be delivered on the evening before the day of publication. This was a fact of considerable importance to me, for it meant that I should probably have to sit up the whole night in writing out the report of the speech. I felt somewhat alarmed at the responsibility thus suddenly put upon me, but I felt also a certain personal pride in the important chance it offered to me, and that emotion was still further stimulated by the assurance which Maguire gave me in his kindly way that I had now obtained my first great opportunity of proving myself a qualified shorthand reporter.

Meagher's speech was very long and very brilliant, containing some passages of glowing and half-poetic eloquence which linger in my memory yet. I was all the more deeply interested in the speech as I heard it because I had always been given to understand that Meagher's speeches were works of elaborate preparation, and that he would never commit himself to the risk of attempting an extemporaneous address. In this particular instance I had the best reason for knowing that Meagher had no intention of delivering any public oration when he entered Cork, and that he had had no time since the task had been forced upon him to make any preparation whatever. Yet the speech impressed me as the very finest I had yet heard him deliver, and superior in many qualities to some

of his speeches which seemed to bear the evidence of careful preparation. I had heard Smith O'Brien speak more than once; but he had absolutely no gift of eloquence, and the influence he exerted over his countrymen was due to his ancestral and historical claims on Irish sympathy, to his absolute sincerity and unselfish patriotism, and perhaps in some degree also to his commanding presence. I may conclude my account of this incident in my career as a reporter by saying that I spent the whole of that night and the following morning in writing out Meagher's speech, and that I considered myself amply rewarded for my toil when I heard from both Maguire and Meagher that no fault was to be found with my rendering of it.

The State trials at Clonmel made an event for me of great personal as well as political and national interest. I was one of the three reporters who were sent from the "Cork Examiner" to take notes of the proceedings, and I felt no little pride in the thought that I was thus admitted to a recognized and important position on the newspaper press. It was not always the very easiest or most agreeable work even apart from the mechanical labour of taking one's turn in the making of notes and converting the shorthand into newspaper "copy," which usually occupied a good deal of time after the rising of the court. It often happened that on the day before the publication of the "Cork Examiner" the proceedings were so

important as to require the appearance of the report in the following day's paper, which was given to the public at a late hour in the afternoon.

These were days, at least in the south of Ireland, before railway travelling had yet come into practice. There were lines of railway, indeed, running from Dublin to various parts of the country, but none of them had yet been extended so far south as to connect Clonmel with Cork city. When we, the three reporters from the "Examiner," were travelling to Clonmel on our first journey, we went by the ordinary stage-coach, still made familiar to modern readers through the pages of Dickens's earlier novels. On fine days such a mode of travel had its pleasant hours; although too many hours of it were apt to beget a wearisome sensation, no matter what might be the charms of the surrounding scenery. The distance between Cork and Clonmel looks but small on a map of Ireland; but I can tell my younger readers that if they had to make the journey on the top of an old-fashioned stage-coach, they would be very likely to regard it as inordinately long and tiresome. But it was not a stage-coach journey which caused the trouble we reporters at the Clonmel State trials felt most trying and exhausting. The "Examiner," let us say, was to appear on the Wednesday evening,—we did not then have much to do with morning newspapers in the south of Ireland,—and some important evidence had been

given on Tuesday which it was absolutely necessary that the readers of the paper should have in its next issue. The court, perhaps, had continued its sitting until some hour long after the departure of the evening stage-coach. In those days it is hardly necessary to say that we had no electric telegraphs at work, and the only way of communicating between Clonmel and Cork was by horse, or horse and vehicle of some sort. There was nothing, therefore, for it but that two of us reporters should charter in Clonmel an Irish jaunting-car, drive through the greater part of the night and morning to Cork, and, when we got there, sit down without thought of rest in the newspaper rooms, go on with the writing out of our "copy" until it was finished, and then start off again as quickly as possible on our return journey to Clonmel. I had to take part in several of these enterprises, and I do not think that any of my later experiences of work or travel have left in my mind so intense an impression of hurry, discomfort, and fatigue. Even the buoyant spirits of youth, about which we writers have always so much to say, did not quite enable us young men engaged in that kind of work to bear up without grumbling against the toil which necessity had thus imposed upon us, or to think only of the national movement while we were grumbling and groaning over the slow and jolting movement of our horse and car.

I must say, however, that the sympathies of my

newspaper colleagues and myself were thoroughly with that national movement, and that we should have felt proud indeed if it had been our good fortune to take any part in it. The trials were deeply interesting, and the prisoners were defended by some of the leading men at the Irish bar, among whom the most conspicuous were James Whiteside, who afterwards sat for a long time in the House of Commons, became law officer in more than one Conservative administration, and finally Lord Chief Justice of the Irish Court of Queen's Bench, and Isaac Butt, who was famous in later years as the leader of the first organised Home Rule movement. Whiteside and Butt were both men of remarkable eloquence, although in very different styles. Whiteside was the more polished and scholarly and ornate of the two; Butt was the more animated, original, and impressive. It was during these trials in Clonmel that I first came into any personal acquaintanceship with William Howard Russell, now Sir William Howard Russell, the famous and brilliant war correspondent of "The Times," — the last, I may say, of the great war correspondents who worked and wrote before the telegraph wires had yet allowed them to send their descriptions of battle flying on the wings of electricity from the very field of war. Russell was then one of the reporters whom "The Times" sent to record for it the proceedings of the Clonmel trials, and I remember that even then, although he was

yet wholly unknown to fame, I regarded him with infinite respect as a countryman of my own who had made his way to an important position in London journalism.

I remember one side incident, happening during the course of the trial, which had and has a deep interest for me. I observed that, while the prisoners stood in the dock, some of their sympathisers and admirers in the court around used to pass along to them through the hands of the officials small volumes, more especially to Smith O'Brien and Meagher, which were returned after a few moments of delay. My curiosity was naturally excited by these doings; and I soon found that the volumes were sent to O'Brien or Meagher by some admirer who prayed for an autograph, and the court officials were reasonable enough not to put any difficulty in the way of these harmless requests. Inspired by the idea, I sent in to the dock to Meagher a volume of Moore's poems I happened to have with me, and an accompanying written line signed by me asking for his autograph. At this very time the court was listening to the evidence of a government informer — Dobbin I think was his name, but he was certainly not of kin with Thackeray's Dobbin — who had been employed by the police to profess himself a devoted Young Irelander, and thus obtain admission to the councils of some of the party, and to make reports accordingly. When my volume came back from

Meagher's kindly and obliging hand, I found that he had written in it these lines from one of Moore's own poems: —

> "Oh! for a tongue to curse the slave
> Whose treason like a deadly blight
> Comes o'er the councils of the brave
> And blasts them in their hour of might."

I need not pursue in any detail the course of the trials. I heard the prisoners sentenced to death with all the accompanying horrors which then made part of a capital sentence in cases of high treason. The capital sentence was not carried out; Queen Victoria commuted it to transportation for life, which was itself long afterwards revoked by an amnesty. Smith O'Brien returned to his own country after many years, and died in Wales. Meagher escaped from Australia and went to the United States, took service on the side of the North during the Civil War, and led his Irish legion gallantly into battle on more than one hard-fought field. After peace had completely been restored, he lost his brave life by an accidental fall from the deck of a steamer one stormy night on the Missouri River. I never saw either Smith O'Brien or Meagher after the close of the State trials in Clonmel.

The failure of the attempted rebellion of 1848 did not extinguish the passionate national sentiment which was deep in the hearts of a large number of the Irish people. This feeling, as was but

natural, burned with warmest glow in the breasts of the younger men. Most of the young men with whom I habitually associated in Cork were bitterly disappointed with the failure of the Tipperary attempt; and not merely with its failure, but with the absence of all thrill and lustre that might in some degree, as it seemed to them, have redeemed even the memory of failure. There was a strong impression among these young men, and among elder men as well, that the sudden, unexpected, and entirely unprepared movement under Smith O'Brien had not done any justice or given any chance to the genuine desire of the Irish people for an effort towards the accomplishment of their independence. The actual truth was that, outside a very small circle of Smith O'Brien's personal friends and associates, there was no knowledge that an immediate attempt at an armed rising was in contemplation. It is a curious fact, also, that John Blake Dillon, one of those who strongly opposed the premature movement, was the only Young Irelander of great influence and well-known name who was found by Smith O'Brien's side in the Ballingarry conflict. Dillon had done his best to dissuade his leader from this rash attempt; but as the leader would not be dissuaded, Dillon was none the less resolved to stand by Smith O'Brien's side to the last. Many or most of the other prominent Young Irelanders did not even know that there was any intention of open-

ing the rebellion just then and there. For all these and many other reasons, the Young Irelanders with whom I was associated refused to admit that Ballingarry had been any test whatever of Ireland's courage and resolve. They were also strongly impressed with the conviction that it would be for the good of the Irish cause if some attempt were made which would prove, at least, that a large number of Irishmen were ready to die in the field on behalf of Ireland's national claims. They were grieved by the thought that the public opinion of England might regard the whole Young Ireland movement as a poetic dream, the inspiration of poets and romancists, and bearing with it no deep determined resolution to make personal sacrifice for the Irish cause. It was their conviction that, after the Ballingarry failure, there could be no hope of impressing on the mind of England the intense earnestness of Ireland's national feeling, unless it were proved that a large number of Irishmen were willing to sacrifice themselves without any expectation of winning even a momentary success, but solely with the object of showing to the whole world their absolute devotion to the honour and the rights of their country.

The result of this feeling was the determination to make another attempt which, if it did nothing else, should convince mankind that the cause was a burning and an inextinguishable reality. A secret movement was organized for this purpose.

The plan was that a simultaneous rising should take place throughout the greater part of the country; that in each locality an attack should be made on the same day and hour on the barracks of the soldiery and police. Thus a struggle should begin which would have the effect of showing that Ireland had her myriads of willing and self-devoted martyrs to the duty of making known her wrongs, and that Irishmen were ready to lay down their lives in protest against them. All this would probably seem to cool and unconcerned observers at the present time a romantic and even quixotic idea. But it was an idea which, as I well know, took a firm hold of thousands of young Irishmen in all parts of Ireland, and might under more favourable conditions have ended in a demonstration well calculated to send a thrill throughout all civilization. Many of the leaders of this organization were personal friends and associates of my own. One of these was the late Joseph Brenan, a rising young literary man and poet of those days, a friend of James Clarence Mangan, the famous author of "Dark Rosaleen." Brenan was then one of the principal writers for a national newspaper in Dublin. He was a Cork man by birth, the brother of a distinguished Catholic clergyman, and had lived all his earlier years in Cork city. He was one of the most gifted young men I have ever known. He had a rare and thrilling command of eloquent speech, and he was regarded by all of us who

knew him, and, indeed, by his fellow citizens in general, as destined to a distinguished literary, political, and patriotic career. Brenan took a leading part in this secret organization, and as a matter of fact it was under his personal guidance that the only serious trouble happened at the time appointed for the simultaneous movement.

But the whole effort proved a failure, as all secret organizations were destined to prove under the existing conditions in Ireland. The paid informer was set to work everywhere, for men willing to do such work were to be found in every community, and could not be detected at the outset by any scrutiny on the part of the Nationalists. These men professed to be enthusiastic members of the brotherhood, and kept the authorities at Dublin Castle thoroughly well informed as to the whole purposes and plans of the organization. The result was that the government had ample time to make their arrangements in advance, to take measures at the last moment for the seizure of arms here, there, and everywhere, and for the arrest and imprisonment of the men who were known to be the leaders of the projected rising. The rising came to nothing, and did not even have the effect which some of us would have regarded as its full title to national gratitude and its service to the Irish cause — the effect of proving that there were thousands of Irishmen ready to lay down their lives in protest against the oppression

and the degradation of their country. After the collapse of the whole movement, Brenan succeeded in making his escape to America, where he won for himself much literary and political distinction; and he died many years after, leaving a name still remembered with affection and gratitude by all Irish Nationalists in the United States. That attempt at insurrection saw my only active personal share in the traditional work of Irish rebellion against English rule. From that time forth I became more and more convinced that the task of righting Ireland's wrongs was to be accomplished by earnest and incessant appeal to the conscience, the reason, and the manly feeling of England's best citizens, and by the determination to regard the legislative independence of Ireland as the satisfaction for Ireland's wrongs and the avenue to the peace, contentment, and prosperity of Ireland. The name of Home Rule had not yet come into use; but from that time I became, what I have ever since continued to be, a convinced and devoted Home Ruler.

I cannot close this chapter without saying a few words about the man who was the first inspiring force of the movement in favour of an armed rebellion. That man was John Mitchel. Mitchel was the son of a Presbyterian minister, and was born in the county of Derry, then a stronghold of the Orange and anti-National party. He was a lawyer by profession, but soon gave himself up alto-

gether to literature, and especially to writing for newspapers. He was at one time assistant editor of "The Nation;" and afterwards started a newspaper of his own, called "The United Irishman," in which he boldly and persistently maintained that Ireland could only achieve her national rights by an armed rebellion. He was one of the most brilliant prose writers Ireland has ever brought forth; and would, I think, have won a name for himself in literature alone, if he had not given up his genius and his heart to the political cause of his country. His newspaper soon became a power in Ireland, and the authorities of Dublin Castle began to find that they must remove him from their path or else encounter an insurrection. At their instigation an act was hastily passed through Parliament creating a new offence called treason-felony, that is to say, making the mere utterance of sedition, even where no overt act of sedition had been committed, a treasonable offence and liable to the punishment of transportation. Under this act, which was specially passed on his account, Mitchel was arraigned, found guilty, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. I had met him only once before his trial, and that was in the offices of the "Cork Examiner." I saw in Cork harbour the vessel which was carrying him out to Van Diemen's Land, the destined place of his exile. Some seven years after he escaped to the United States; and after a long interval of time I had several opportunities of

meeting and talking with him in New York. He was an absolutely sincere and most highly gifted man, devoted with a generous fanaticism to every cause he took up; and under happier conditions he might well have become a benefactor to his country and an ornament to literature.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROAD OF IMAGINATION

In this small seaside place on the Kentish coast of England where I have lately passed some secluded years, I can see from one of my windows a road which gently winds along a rising ground, having the blue waves at its side, and then, reaching the highest level of the land, is lost in the horizon. This road seems to me an emblem of that ideal road we may be all said to look upon in our moments of fanciful musing. It is the road leading to the land of imagination and of poetry, to the ideal country of our vague aspirations, to the capital city of a realm of romance for which we have all yearned at one time or another. During that early period of my life the road of imagination was always leading my fancy to London. I am not ever likely to forget my first sight of Rome, of Athens, of Constantinople, of Cairo, of Jerusalem, and I can easily recall to mind my early longings for a first sight of these immortal cities. But at the time about which I am now writing, my yearnings were especially for a first sight of London.

That desire was not inspired merely by the

literature of prose and poetry which made London to me the central point of the universe. There was an element of the prosaic and the practical stimulating my wish for the first look at London. I had got into my mind that London was the only place where a young man with a love for literary work, who had already become associated with journalism, could hope to make a good living by the exercise of his intelligence and his pen. The conditions of my family were making it more and more necessary that I should strive for an engagement in the English capital. My sister had been for a long time in sinking health; and while she lived I could not think of leaving her for the sake of any hope of advancement, and I could not subject her to the risk and trouble of an enterprise for a new and a distant place of settlement. But my sister died at the age of twenty, and my brother had already made up his mind to seek his fortune at the first opportunity in the United States; and there was, thus, no serious difficulty in the way of my making an attempt to secure an engagement in London. I resolved to get together a few pounds, and to go over to London for the purpose of trying to obtain a place on some newspaper there. The only friend I had in London was a fellow countryman who had been a colleague of mine for some time on the "Cork Examiner," and who had more lately obtained a seat in the Press gallery of the House of Com-

mons as a reporter for one of the London daily newspapers. I knew that he would help me if he possibly could; and it was something, at all events, to have a friend in London who could at least put me in the right way of getting an engagement. So I made my arrangements, and, in the early part of 1852, I accomplished my first expedition to the London of my dreams.

I went by steamer from Cork to Liverpool, and spent two or three days there at the house of a friend and his sister who were then settled in the city of the Mersey; and I may say in advance that this visit proved a great event in my life, for the sister of my friend afterwards became my dearly loved and now long-lamented wife. I left Liverpool for London early one morning, travelling by what was then called a parliamentary train, that is, a train wholly composed of carriages for which only the lowest recognized rate of fares was charged, and which had to stop at all manner of stations and get itself "shunted" in order to allow the trains with first and second class carriages to pass it on the way. I did not arrive at London until late evening was already darkening into night, and I got my first sight of the great city as we rumbled slowly along on the top of an omnibus from Euston Square to the regions of the Bank and the Mansion House. It was not, certainly, a very fascinating sight; but still it was a sight of London. I had already been studying

London for years, and the name of every street through which or across which we passed brought to my mind some memories of what I had read in plays and poems and novels. It seemed to me, not that I was coming into an entirely strange and unknown city, but that I was revisiting streets with whose history and associations I was already quite familiar. Perhaps for that very reason the darkness of the hour was only all the better fitted for the realization of my dreams about London. The gaslights in the streets — I need hardly say we had no electric lighting then — did not illuminate strongly enough to reveal all the prosaic characteristics of the streets and the houses, and only lent a new touch of the poetic to the regions I was then looking on for the first time. "Darkness," says a poet, "shows us realms of light we never saw by day." The poet was writing only of the stars; but the darkness of that London showed me not merely the realms of gaslight not to be seen by day, but, with that gaslight's help, some realms of the London of my imagination which might not have been seen so clearly by me if I had looked upon them for the first time under the pitiless revelations of the noonday sun.

I may dispose briefly of the practical results which came of my expedition to London. These practical results amounted for the time to little or nothing, but they were not without some later influence on the purposes of my visit. My friend

whom I have already mentioned introduced me to the managers of the reporting staffs of two or three daily newspapers, and got my name put down as a candidate for a place at some vague future opportunity. Just now, however, I am more inclined to say something about my first impressions of London than to deal much with the personal incidents of my own early struggles. I spent a fortnight in London, and all the time that I had to spare from my quest after an engagement was devoted to the delightful task of seeing everything I could see of London sights and London's famous places. I had come too late to see that great exhibition in the Crystal Palace, the first of all those many and memorable exhibitions of industrial products which have been organized since then in so many great cities of the world from London and Paris to St. Louis. The Crystal Palace exhibition was opened and closed in 1851, but I had at least the satisfaction of seeing the Palace itself in Hyde Park on its old site before there was any thought of its removal to its present situation. So far as its older streets and quarters were concerned, London was then in outer aspects very much the same as it is at the present day. Only in the methods of street traffic was there much difference in those older regions between the London of 1852 and the London of our own time. There were no tramways then, and there were no underground railways or "tubes"; but we saw, just as now, the

old-fashioned four-wheeler and the hansom cab, while the sort of vehicle described in Dickens's earlier novels, the vehicle in which the driver occupied a seat planted close to the side of that assigned to the "fare," had already wholly disappeared from the streets of London. There was no Thames Embankment at that time, or for many years after, and the banks of the Thames within the metropolis itself were lined by dingy wharfs, rows of old-fashioned warehouses, and tumble-down shops, shanties, and places for the sale of drink. From Westminster Bridge to London Bridge the banks of the river were made about as unlovely and unpicturesque as could well be accomplished even by the perverted ingenuity of man. There were some peculiarities of the London streets even still which recalled the old times and habits described in many of the books I loved. The swinging signboards, the tablets illumined by the great names that make part of the history of certain houses, the narrow lanes which turned sharply and abruptly out of broad thoroughfares and seemed to bring back the living presence of mediæval town life, these and other such evidences of London's historic antiquity were studied by me with an ever freshening delight.

But there were some other peculiarities in certain of the smaller streets running out of or behind the Strand which impressed my stranger mind in a very different and less favourable manner. A

reader whose recollections of London do not go back farther than the last twenty years might find it hard to believe that a civilized community could behold such sights as we might all have seen in London at the time when the great exhibition was held in Hyde Park, and for long after. Certain small streets here and there seemed to have acquired the privilege of outraging public decency in the grossest fashion, without any interference whatever on the part of the constituted authorities. I shall not ask too much attention from my readers to this repulsive subject; but I think it is well, as a mere matter of historical narrative, to say something of the sights to be seen every day, which I myself saw at that time in the immediate neighbourhood of the Strand, of its thronging crowds, its numerous police, and its great churches. To many Londoners of these days it is quite possible that the names of Holywell Street and Wych Street may suggest no particularly repulsive idea. But at the time of which I am writing these two streets bordering the very centre of the Strand were such as the lowest slums of London or New York in the present time could not equal for abomination. Most of the houses in these streets were shops for the sale of indecent books and pictures. The pictures and books — more especially the pictures — were flauntingly displayed in the windows of each shop, and were gross beyond all possible description. Then a great many of the small

houses in these streets were occupied by women of the professionally immoral class; and it was the habit of these young women to stand at their doors in the open day, and to invite the attention of passing men, each woman wearing no costume whatever but her chemise and her slippers. The police authorities do not seem to have given themselves the slightest concern about these exhibitions. There were many other places in the metropolis — such, for instance, as the road running south from Waterloo Bridge — where almost as open a display was made through the brightest hours of the day, but none that I saw were quite as bad as Holywell Street and Wych Street. There is some satisfaction in the knowledge that no such places are to be seen in the open day of London now, and that Holywell Street and Wych Street have ceased to exist. I do not venture to say that the morals of the metropolis have improved to any corresponding degree, and I am afraid that the scenes still presented at night in the Piccadilly regions are not such as could give any satisfaction to the contemplative and healthy-minded observer. But it is worth noticing that the sights which were to be seen in certain streets and alleys all day long when I first visited London belong now altogether to the history of the past.

During that first visit of mine to London, the figure of the Duke of Wellington, the victor of Waterloo, was still often to be seen in the West

End streets. I saw him several times in Piccadilly and St. James Street as he was driving in the curious cabriolet he had devised for his own especial use and comfort, and I passed him also in the same region as he was going along, a quiet pedestrian, at whom every one stopped to gaze. I saw him once in the House of Lords on the occasion of my first visit to the Strangers' gallery of that august assembly, and I heard him deliver a speech that lives in my memory more fixedly than it might have done even if it had been an oration worthy of Lord Chatham or the eloquent Lord Derby, the Rupert of debate. When I came into the gallery, a discussion was going on concerning some new measure which had been introduced to the House that evening, and on which the Duke of Wellington appeared to have already offered some observations. When I came into the House, a noble and learned Lord was replying to the criticisms of the Duke. In the course of his speech he said that he was afraid "the illustrious Duke" did not quite understand the full bearing of the Bill then before the House. Thereupon "the illustrious Duke" suddenly interrupted the noble and learned Lord by rising from his seat, coming to the table, striking that piece of furniture very heavily with his clenched hand, and exclaiming some such words as these: "My Lords, the noble and learned Lord has said that I do not seem to understand this Bill. Well, my Lords, I can only say that I read the Bill

carefully through once, twice, and three times, and if, after that, I do not understand the Bill, why, then, my Lords, I must be a damned stupid fellow." Then the Duke of Wellington resumed his seat; and that was the only speech I ever heard him deliver. On one of the occasions when I met him in the street, he happened to pass a small group of workmen who had been doing something to the pavement. One of the workmen turned round as he passed, recognized the Duke, and called out to his fellows, " Mates, there goes grand old Nosey " — a familiar allusion to the illustrious Duke's most distinguishing feature.

Of course I paid some visits to the House of Commons during my first stay in London, and the place had then and always a strong fascination for me. But during this experience of mine I had not the chance of hearing many of the great speakers. Indeed, the first orator I heard in the House was one of the members for that city of Cork from which I had just come, a man of considerable ability, but who, unfortunately for me, was in the habit of making very long speeches among his own constituents. I had reported many of these speeches, was very familiar with their style and length, and I am afraid had come to regard them as rather tedious exercises. The reader, therefore, may imagine what my feelings were when, as I entered the Strangers' gallery of the House for the first time, and was settling down into my seat,

I recognized the too familiar voice of the orator then in possession, and found that my introduction to parliamentary eloquence was listening to a speech in the well-known tones of my compatriot. The speech lasted so long that I was not able to wait until the end of it; the benches of the House were but very thinly occupied, and I had to own to myself as I left Westminster Palace that this, my earliest experience of parliamentary debate, had not quite come up to my fond anticipations. The Terrace of the House of Commons had not then become the brilliant social institution it became in later days, and there were no groups of fine ladies to be seen along its pavement.

I gave up my evenings for the most part to the theatres and to the opera houses; I saw with genuine delight some performances by Charles Mathews, the greatest of English light comedians at that time or, as I still think, of any later time, Helen Faucit, Phelps, the Keeleys, Buckstone, and Benjamin Webster, and I heard in the opera houses Grisi, Alboni, Mario, and Lablache. Macready had given up the stage not long before my visit to London, but I had already seen him more than once in the theatre of my native city when he was making a starring tour in Ireland. I must say that, much as I loved the drama and the opera, the greatest attractions for me were found in the streets and the parks of London itself, and in the

Temple Gardens. I loved to visit every spot which had some association with history and poetry and novels, with Shakespeare and Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb, with Dickens and Thackeray. The result of my visit, on the whole, was to make London for me a place of even greater fascination than it had been when it was yet only the London of my dreams. I became more than ever resolved to make it, if I possibly could, my home and the place of my work. I remember that once, when I was passing the Houses of Parliament, I stopped and looked back on the towers of Westminster Palace; and I formed in my own mind the audacious ambition and hope that I might one day be privileged to enter that enclosure as a member of the House of Commons. Then I felt inclined to laugh at myself for the audacity of my youthful aspirations, and consoled myself for my revulsion of feeling by the more modest hope that I might at least, at some not very distant time, be privileged to have a seat in the Reporters' gallery.

My first visit to London was speedily and quite unexpectedly followed by another under more promising auspices than the first, so far as personal ease and comfort were concerned. Some measure of great importance to the interests of the south of Ireland was to come up for examination before a committee of the House of Commons, and John Francis Maguire was anxious to have a full report of each day's proceedings for the "Cork

Examiner." He selected me for this work, and my mind was thereupon filled with two rival delights — the delight of having my qualifications as a reporter thus recognized, and the delight of another visit to London. Maguire then had lodgings in London in a quiet street near to the Haymarket, and we had thus a place within easy reach of the principal theatres and the Houses of Parliament. Maguire was a delightful companion, a man of the most kindly and generous nature, and he did all that he possibly could to make my stay in London this time a genuine holiday. We went to some theatre or to the House of Commons every night, and we dined at the best restaurants to be found in London in the days long before such luxurious resorts as the Carlton, the Savoy, and the Cecil had come into existence.

I have a very distinct recollection of an incident which occurred one night while we were seated in the Haymarket Theatre. The report suddenly reached the theatre that Thomas Francis Meagher, the Irish orator and patriot, had succeeded in escaping from the convict settlement in Australia, and was supposed to have taken shipping for the United States. The news soon spread through the stalls and boxes and pit of the theatre, and we heard the name repeated on every side. But it was not repeated with exactly its proper pronunciation, for the name of our distinguished countryman was passed along as if it had been spelled " Meeger."

I am bound to say that, so far as we could hear, there was a tone of sympathy in the spreading of the news from the British lips of those who were within our range of hearing. "Poor young Meeger has escaped from Australia" was the form of communication in which, for the most part, we heard the news made known; and so far as we could judge, there was only a feeling of satisfaction in this thoroughly English audience that a brilliant young public man had obtained emancipation from the horrors of a convict settlement.

It was during this visit to London that I first came to see and hear Austen Henry Layard, the famous explorer of the ruins of Nineveh, who had lately been elected a member of the House of Commons. I had many opportunities at later times of meeting with Layard, who held office more than once under successive governments, who was afterwards British ambassador to Madrid and then to Constantinople, and became Sir Austen Henry Layard. It was during that second visit to London that I first had the opportunity of listening to the eloquent pleadings of James Hope-Scott, who had married Miss Lockhart, daughter of Walter Scott's famous biographer. Lockhart himself had married Walter Scott's daughter, and it was on their daughter's accession to the Abbotsford estate that Hope added the name of Scott to his own family name. It was his connection with the family of the immortal novelist that made Hope-Scott an espe-

cially interesting figure in my eyes. Hope-Scott and his wife had lately joined the Catholic Church, and I could not help thinking it a somewhat remarkable stroke of fate which had caused the estates of Sir Walter, who certainly had never shown any sympathy with the religion of the Church of Rome, to pass into the hands of two converts to the ancient faith.

Maguire knew London well, and was able to show to me many places of interest which I had not observed before. When I returned to my native city after the second visit to the great metropolis, I began to regard myself as quite an authority on the aspects and the ways of London. I had made it known to Maguire that my great ambition was to obtain an engagement on some London newspaper; and he, the kindliest and most sympathetic of men, who thoroughly understood my family conditions and knew well that I had to make a hard struggle for life on the narrow field of a provincial city, promised to give me every help in his power towards the realization of my desire. He fulfilled his promise most resolutely and faithfully, and to his influence I was indebted for some of the opportunities which helped me towards obtaining a wider and more promising field for my modest ambition. My life as a journalist was soon to have a change of scene.

CHAPTER VII

FROM LEE TO MERSEY

Not long after my return to Cork I made the acquaintance of Hercules George Robert Robinson, who afterwards came to hold high and responsible office as Governor of various British Colonies, succeeded Sir John Bowring as Governor of Hong Kong, later still became Governor of the Cape of Good Hope in succession to Sir Bartle Frere, and finally became Lord Rosmead. Hercules Robinson, when I first knew him, was merely Captain Robinson, a young man of good family who had held a commission in the army, but retired and was employed in many civil offices by the authorities of Dublin Castle. Just before the time when I came to know him, he had been appointed President of a commission of inquiry into the state of fairs and markets in Ireland, the business of which was to go through all the market towns of the country, hear evidence as to their capacity and condition, and make a full report to the Government. The commission consisted only of Hercules Robinson himself and one assistant commissioner, an Irish country gentleman and magistrate, who, although a very quiet-going and unambitious per-

sonage, bore the remarkable name of Macbeth. There was also a Secretary to the commission, the principal duty of this Secretary being to take a full shorthand note of all the evidence brought before the commission in order that the Government might be presented with a report which afterwards could be turned into a Blue Book. The commission began its inquiry in Dublin, and then journeyed down southwards as far as Cork, stopping at all the towns and important villages along its line of movement, and holding an inquiry as to the demands and qualifications of each locality.

When the commission held its inquiry in Cork, it became my work to make a note of each day's proceedings for publication in the "Examiner," and these reports apparently met with the approval of the commissioners. It so happened that for some reason or other the Secretary to the commission was not able to continue his functions any longer and had to give up the appointment. Thereupon Captain Robinson offered the place to me, and Maguire, who thought it would be for my advantage to accept the offer, recommended me with his usual considerate kindness to undertake the duties, promising me that when the work of the commission was done, I should find my former place on the staff of the "Examiner" still open to me if I should feel it necessary to return to my old work. The pay offered by the commission seemed to me very tempting at that time—

I was actually to have one guinea a day and my travelling expenses. I was much taken also by the prospect of making thus a survey of the greater part of Ireland, and of having a prolonged stay in Dublin for the completion of the report when the travelling and the holding of inquiries should have come to an end. I therefore gladly accepted the offer, and thus for the first and I may safely presume for the only time in my life, I came to hold an appointment under Government. So I joined the commissioners at Dungarvan in the county of Waterford, and entered there upon my official duties. We visited every town and every considerable village in Ireland which the commissioners had not previously explored, and our duties occupied us for several months.

There would have been under ordinary conditions a certain monotony in the occupation on which I had entered. The commission held an inquiry every week day; in the smaller places the inquiry was easily finished in one day, but in the towns it often lasted for a longer time, as a large number of locally influential personages were anxious to be allowed an opportunity of expressing their views on the subjects under inquiry. When the holding of each day's inquiry was done, we either travelled on to the place which came next on the list, or we spent the evening in the local hotel, and I need hardly say that the accommodation in the villages and in the smaller towns

was not always of a very luxurious order. But the travelling and the sojourn at the hotels, which must have been monotonous and dreary work under other conditions, was made positively delightful by the good spirits, the kindliness, and the entertaining powers of the chief commissioner. Hercules Robinson was one of the most variously accomplished, humorous, and interesting men it has ever been my good fortune to know. Although he had not up to that time gone through any of the strange experiences which came to his lot during the long years of his office as a Colonial Governor, he had made the best use of his observation and his reading thus far, and he could illumine the dullest place or subject by his comments and his inexhaustible humour. He was a capital story-teller, had a keen eye for the comic element in everything, and was endowed with a power of mimicry which I have often thought would have won for him an amazing popularity if fate had destined him to be an actor in comedy and not a ruler of some of Queen Victoria's far-divided Colonial possessions. We always dined together when the local authorities did not insist on offering their formal hospitality to the commissioners, and when our official work for the evening was done, we usually sat up to a late hour and Captain Robinson read to us some passages from one of his favourite authors. He was an admirable reader, had a fine voice, and could make every character

in the novels from which he read to us seem alive by his power of characteristic expression. I may perhaps be allowed to quote from my published "Reminiscences" some instances which I described there of Robinson's humorous ways.

"The commissioners had to receive deputations from the municipal authorities in many of the towns through which we passed. Each deputation came in due form, headed by the Mayor or some other representative of the local community. Captain Robinson received each deputation with a bland and deferential grace which was quite touching to behold. He listened with an air of gravity and attention to all representations which the visitors desired to make; he encouraged and even invited further expressions of opinion, and drew out some hitherto silent member by appealing to him for an exposition of his own personal views. When all the deputations desired to say had been said, Captain Robinson, in a few sentences of eloquent gravity, assured his visitors that the commissioners had taken due account of their representations, and that the Government should be made fully acquainted with the wants and wishes of so important a locality, and that the commissioners would not fail to impress upon Her Majesty's Ministers the necessity of giving the promptest attention to the representations which the commissioners intended to present in the form

of a report. . . . But then, when the doors were closed, the chief commissioner at once proceeded to favour his colleague and his Secretary with an extemporaneous imitation of the voice, the accent, the gestures, and the eloquent style of this, that, and the other member of the deputation. Never since those days have I formed one of a group waiting on some great public personage who listened to us gravely and attentively and bowed us out courteously without feeling an uneasy suspicion that the moment our backs were turned the great personage went to work to amuse some colleagues with a droll imitation of our speeches and our manners. I have thus often been led to think of Captain Robinson in the Treasury Buildings or Westminster Palace or the Offices of the Board of Trade while a score of years and thousands of miles lay between him and me."

One other citation I am bound to make in order that the reader may fully appreciate the more serious side of Robinson's nature and his full capacity for the practical work which he had to do.

"But I must do justice to Robinson. When the mimicry of the departed deputation was over, Robinson always set himself down with earnestness and patience to examine into the nature of every complaint that had been made, every griev-

ance that had been described, every mode of remedy that had been suggested. Even at this time I could see that he had the inborn gift of administration; not a word said by any member of any deputation was lost upon him, or failed to receive the most careful consideration from him, even though he did make fun of some of the delegates when their backs were turned, for the amusement of his travelling companions."

The greater part of a lifetime had passed away when I next met Sir Hercules Robinson, soon after to be Lord Rosmead, and soon after that to close his brilliant career.

After the work of the Markets Commission had been done, I returned to Cork and took up my position once again as a reporter for the "Examiner." But my resolve to seek for some wider sphere of journalism had only grown stronger than before, and when I received an offer of an engagement on the staff of a new Liverpool paper, I felt myself bound to accept it as a stepping-stone on my way to London. The journal from which I received this offer was then about to begin its career as the first daily paper published in the English provinces. It was called the "Northern Daily Times," and it began with a gallant flourish of trumpets. I was at first engaged merely as a reporter, but I soon became its literary critic and its dramatic critic. I began to write some of its leading arti-

cles, and before it closed its career I was one of its editorial staff. It was hard work enough, as may easily be understood — all the more so because my duties grew every day more varied and less distinctly defined. I may say, however, that I felt very much at home from the first in my new sphere of work, and for the good reason that the majority of my colleagues came from my own country. Some of the men in the editorial rooms were Irish, some of the reporters were Irish, and the nationality of the head reporter will not need to be further established when I say that his name was Patrick Murphy. One of my associates on the reporting staff, George Callaghan, had actually been a colleague of mine on the "Cork Examiner" from the first day when I became attached to that paper. He had received from the "Northern Daily Times" an offer like to that which was made to me, and he had accepted it, and we had travelled from Cork together.

The work was somewhat hard for the staff of reporters. We had to attend the police courts, the county courts, the Town Council meetings, and the meetings of the various other public boards and institutions in Liverpool, and of course we had to be on the lookout for accidents and events in the great line of docks and on the Mersey. Even Sunday was not quite a day of rest, for we had always then to visit the local infirmaries to ascertain whether any new casualties called

for description in Monday's paper. Saturday was our nearest approach to a holiday, and some of us were very fond of devoting a great part of that day to a long ramble into the country. One favourite expedition with a few of us was to cross the Mersey in one of the river steamers to the farthest accessible point on the Cheshire side, and from that point to walk for some thirteen delightful miles of country road into the ancient and most picturesque city of Chester. I think it was Matthew Arnold who said that Oxford was the only place which could be seen after Venice without a sensation of anticlimax. I should be rather inclined to give that position to Chester. I have not seen Chester for many years, but it must ever be to me like a dream city, or like a material creation of poetry and romance.

My literary work, if I may call it by so fine a name, was the part of my duties which I most enjoyed. I wrote reviews of books, I was the recognised dramatic critic for the paper, and I was entrusted with the task of describing the local exhibitions of the painter's and the sculptor's art. Liverpool prided itself much on its artistic appreciation, and its leading citizens proudly insisted that it had ever been the first among British cities to recognise and welcome some rising figure or new development in the artistic world. Liverpool had a local academy of pictures which always made a goodly show in the season,

and where I can confidently assert some really great painters were welcomed before they had yet won recognition in London. I found much pleasure in doing the work of theatrical critic, and the privilege of free admission to drama and to opera was something of which to feel proud. My ambition began to take more and more a distinct literary form, and in my visions of the future I already began to see a place among authors and no longer among reporters. There were some good literary societies in Liverpool, although the general tone of Liverpool's busy citizens was not very literary or artistic. There was a Catholic Institute at which young men of my own creed had opportunities of listening to addresses from eminent men, and even of delivering lectures themselves if they felt courage and qualification for such a task. James Martineau, the famous Unitarian preacher and teacher, was a ruling spirit among those of his own faith in Liverpool, and there was a literary institution, guided much by his inspiration, to which men of all faiths were welcomed as members. I soon found myself one of a considerable circle of young men deeply interested in books, and we used to hold meetings for the discussion of various subjects and for the reading of essays.

I may mention that it was in Liverpool John Henry Newman, afterwards Cardinal Newman, delivered his famous lectures on the dominion of

the Turks in Europe. This was just before the outbreak of the Crimean War, and the main purpose of the lectures was to maintain that the Ottoman power had established no claim whatever to be accepted by Europe as a civilized and civilizing government. Newman declared emphatically, and this was indeed the moral of his discourses, that the Turk had no more right to any part of European soil than the pirate had to the seas which he ravaged. I heard these lectures and reported them for the "Northern Daily Times." The vast majority of Englishmen just then were enthusiastic for any policy directed against Russia, and were eager for an alliance with Louis Napoleon, and so the warnings of Newman were but little heeded. Every year which has passed since the Crimean War has done something to justify Newman's teaching, and at the period we have now reached the English mind is becoming more and more convinced that there cannot possibly be peace or prosperity in the southeast of Europe while the Ottoman power is still permitted to hold in servitude European and Christian populations.

One of the leading public men in Liverpool at this time was Robertson Gladstone, the elder but not the eldest brother of William Ewart Gladstone. Robertson Gladstone was one of the tallest men I have ever seen outside a show of giants. He was much taller than Thackeray;

he was taller than Samuel Whitbread or Cecil Raikes, who for a long time disputed the dignity of being the tallest member of the House of Commons. I have heard Robertson Gladstone say that he always felt uneasy and uncomfortable while walking in the London streets — groups of people as he passed would come to a halt and stare wonderingly after him. In his own Liverpool, he said, everybody knew him, and nobody made any demonstration of surprise at his appearance. He was a leading man in politics and in local affairs, and although he had not his brother's magnificent gift of eloquence, he was a very impressive speaker and never uttered a commonplace. He was a master of finance, and I have often heard on very good authority that his brother, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, used always to consult him and to have his assistance in the preparation of the Budget and the careful working out of its financial schemes. Robertson Gladstone, like his brother, had begun life as a Tory, but he too had become converted to Liberal doctrines, and before long he went far ahead of William Ewart Gladstone in the extreme radicalism of his opinions. There was a certain amount of eccentricity about him which made him the subject of occasional ridicule among his political opponents, but Robertson Gladstone was so intensely in earnest in the maintenance of his own views that he never seemed to take the slightest notice of any efforts made

to turn him and them into subjects for jest and laughter. He was himself by no means devoid of the quality of humour, but while he was concerned in advocating a cause he troubled himself little about anything but its advocacy, and paid no attention to anything personal which his opponents might choose to say about him.

A yet more remarkable and much more picturesque figure which I remember to have seen often in the streets of Liverpool was that of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the great American novelist, who held for some years the position of United States Consul in the great seaport town of the Mersey. Hawthorne was one of the handsomest men I ever saw. His noble features, his eyes now flashing with sudden light, now dreamily meditative, must have impressed even the least artistic of observers. I can well remember that the first time I passed him in a Liverpool street I became vividly impressed by his appearance and eager to know who he might be, not having at the time the least suspicion that he was the author of "The Scarlet Letter," "The Blithedale Romance," and other books equally dear to me. I used to see Hawthorne often after that first day and when I had come to know who he was. Only once, I think, had I any opportunity of entering into conversation with him, and that was on the occasion of the launch of a ship in the Mersey, when the American Consul was not likely to have much chance of conversing with so inconsiderable

a person as myself. Hawthorne was one of the shyest of men, and I often wondered at the time how he ever contrived to get on in such a position as that of American Consul in Liverpool, where he was certain to be besieged all day by crowds of his own travelling countrymen, and by commercial Englishmen and shippers eager to transact business with him. I remember that in those far-off days he used to wear, when the weather was cold, a heavy plaid shawl wrapped around his shoulders and breast — a garment common enough among men of that time, but now as unlikely to be seen on Liverpool streets as the crimson cloak of a mediæval cavalier. He often had a little boy with him in his walks, a little boy whom I afterwards came to know well when he had grown to be the distinguished author, Julian Hawthorne. Among my recollections of Liverpool there are no memories more picturesque than those which I associate with Nathaniel Hawthorne and his son.

Meanwhile I had been venturing on bold enterprises in the paths of literature. On the suggestion of some of my friends and encouraged by their support, I had actually undertaken the delivery of a series of lectures in the public hall of a local educational institution. My first lecture displayed most assuredly courage, not to say audacity, for it had as its subject the works of Goethe. I look back with a certain qualified admiration and almost unqualified wonder on my venture on such

an undertaking. I had been a great reader of Goethe's dramas, novels, and poems, and I flattered myself that I was able to appreciate them. So with the reckless self-confidence of a young man I delivered my lecture, and at all events I did not break down in its delivery. I think I had one advantage in this my first appearance before a Liverpool audience. I gave my address extemporaneously and without the assistance of any notes whatever. In truth, I never had the art of preparing carefully a lecture or speech — I could only think over the subject and then allow the words to take care of themselves when I rose in front of my audience and began to speak. If I were to write out carefully the whole of an address, I should not be able to commit it to memory, and my short sight prevents me from making ready use of written notes. Therefore it was my way throughout the whole of my public career to think out my subject as well as I could beforehand, and to trust to the moment of speaking for the form of words my thoughts were to adopt. I can quite believe that this is not the way in which really great lectures and speeches are made; but then I did not fancy myself capable under any conditions of delivering a really great lecture or speech, and so I allowed myself to follow my own way. I have delivered many courses of lectures during later years, have spoken from a great many public platforms, and have many times succeeded in catching the eye

of Mr. Speaker in the House of Commons, but I have always trusted to the inspiration of the moment for the words which were to embody my convictions and my arguments. This was, I think, the one advantage I had in these my first attempts at lecturing. The audience understood that it was being talked to, and not treated to an elaborate display going over its head. Thus an active sympathy was created from the first between the lecturer and his listeners. I gave lectures on Schiller and Jean Paul Richter, and afterwards I condescended so far as to give discourses concerning plays of Massinger and Webster and Dekker — mere English authors, whom any Briton could read for himself — and even on the novels of Fielding and Smollett.

In the mean time some Liverpool friends of mine had actually ventured to start a Liverpool comic weekly paper in a sort of far-off and modest rivalry with "Punch," or, to do them justice, I should rather say in modest imitation of "Punch;" for, although young writers, they were much too reasonable to fancy that they could approach to anything like the wit and humour of the great London "Charivari." The new paper was called "The Porcupine," and it set up its quills with some vigour of aggressiveness. To "The Porcupine" I became a regular contributor in verse as well as in prose, and I continued to write for it after I had left Liverpool. Another literary oppor-

tunity opened before me. There was then a review called the "London Quarterly," which had a considerable circulation, chiefly among the dissenting denominations, and its editor was in the habit of paying visits every now and then to Liverpool. Through the kindness of some friends I was brought into acquaintanceship with him and received an invitation to contribute to the review. He even suggested a subject for my first attempt, and I readily undertook the enterprise. The article, when finished, was fortunate enough to please this not too exacting editor, and the reader may imagine if he can what my feelings of wonder and gratification were when shortly after its publication I received a cheque for nine guineas with an invitation to send in further contributions. My salary as a reporter was at that time just two guineas a week, with a moderate extra allowance for my work as a reviewer and dramatic critic, and to receive nine guineas all in a lump for one literary article covering but a few pages of the "London Quarterly" seemed to me an event foreshadowing a way to approaching fortune. The articles in the "London Quarterly" were of course, like those of all the other contemporary reviews, published anonymously; but the mere fact that an article of mine had been thought worthy of publication and payment by a London periodical seemed to me a bright omen for my literary future. I continued to write for the "London Quarterly," and it so happened that the

very last year of my residence in Liverpool was the occasion of a centenary celebration in honour of the birth of Schiller. I wrote an article on Schiller and his centenary celebration for the "London Quarterly," and to my utter astonishment and delight it attracted the attention of the German committee who had organized the ceremonial. The committee found out, through the kindness, I suppose, of the "London Quarterly" editor, who the writer of the article was, and I received from them an exquisite medallion of Schiller's head in clay, which had been modelled for distribution in honour of the occasion. Never before had I felt so proud of any piece of good fortune. Through all the long years which have passed between that time and the present that medallion has ever been with me, and it is an ornament of my study as I settle down to my daily work. My eyes turn to it with a loving sentiment at the present moment.

The progress I had made in literature, such as it was, began to fill me with an ever increasing wish to try my chances in London. My father and mother had been with me for some time in Liverpool, and then an event had taken place which I have already anticipated in these pages. During my first brief visit to Liverpool I had fallen in love, and before I had long settled down in the city of the Mersey the love had been crowned by marriage. It was a romantic marriage in every sense; for it had neither money nor clear prospects to jus-

tify it, and according to all the regular prosaic calculations it ought to have ended in disaster. It did not so end, however; for it was happy and prosperous in every true sense, and I had four and twenty years of the closest and dearest companionship — a companionship which was interrupted only by the death of my wife. I have not given my readers much of my family affairs, and the story of my love and marriage is told in these few lines.

During my work in Liverpool I first came to appreciate the genius, the purposes, and the eloquence of Richard Cobden and John Bright. I heard the two for the first time at a great meeting in the Free Trade Hall of Manchester, and I shall never forget the impression produced on me by the speeches they then delivered. Afterwards I heard them both in other Lancashire towns, at open-air meetings and in public halls. During my visits to Chester I more than once saw William Ewart Gladstone, in the red jacket and hunting-cap of those days, mounted on the horse which he knew so well how to ride, going to or returning from some sporting expedition in that region. Gladstone was a splendid rider, and was declared by Rarey, the famous American horse tamer of that time, to be the finest horseman he had ever seen in England. One event of a very different kind associated with the name and fame of Gladstone was a memorable occurrence in my life. It

was while Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the introduction of his Budget was looked for with the deepest interest in Liverpool. The "Northern Daily Times" determined to have a special report of his speech introducing the Budget, and I was one of the three reporters chosen to take notes of the speech. This may now seem a task easy of accomplishment and involving no particular difficulty, but the arrangements of the House of Commons were then very different, so far as the newspaper press was concerned, from those prevailing at present. There were no places reserved in the Reporters' gallery for representatives of the provincial press, and we might as well have expected to get seats on the green benches of the House itself as to find seats in the gallery allotted to the staffs of the London daily papers. Fortunately for our enterprise, Mr. Cardwell, afterwards Lord Cardwell, was then one of the members for Liverpool, and he was very anxious to assist us in our endeavour to convey to his constituents a full report of Gladstone's speech at the earliest possible opportunity. Mr. Cardwell prevailed upon the Sergeant-at-Arms to make some sort of arrangement, and we got a table set out for us in a corridor behind the last row of the Strangers' gallery. Now the seats in the last row or two of the Strangers' gallery itself are but ill adapted for the full hearing of all that goes on in the House of Commons, and if the Chancellor of the

Exchequer had been any other man than Mr. Gladstone, we should probably have made but a poor piece of work of our reporting, placed as we were at the back of the gallery and with a partition of glass shutting us off still more from the sound of the orator's words. Our nervous anxiety and trepidation were raised to feverish height during all the opening part of the evening's business, for we found that we could hardly hear a consecutive sentence of any question asked or answer given during the preliminaries of the great debate. But when Gladstone rose to deliver his speech, all doubt and fear vanished from our minds. That magnificent voice, that expressive intonation, satisfied us from the first sentence that not a word of his speech was likely to be lost upon our attentive ears. We accomplished our full report, then wrote out our "copy," and the whole of the speech appeared the next morning in the columns of the "Northern Daily Times." It was a great triumph for us, the three reporters, and we felt very proud of our achievement, although its whole success was due to the fact that Mr. Gladstone could make every word of his speech heard by us where most of his predecessors and his successors must have failed to make a single sentence clearly heard by note-takers divided from him by such obstacles and such a distance.

I must bring to a close the narrative of my experiences in Liverpool. During the year 1859

I received an offer of an engagement as reporter on a London newspaper, the "Morning Star." The "Morning Star" had been at that time little more than three years in existence. It was a journal started to advocate the principles of Cobden and Bright, and at the time there was a general feeling of doubt as to the possibility of its success. I was, however, only too delighted to catch at the opportunity thus afforded to me of beginning a career in London. My choice would have been the same in any case, but it was further stimulated by the fact that the "Northern Daily Times" was becoming a financial failure. I had lately been acting as one of its editors, and I can only hope that no ill-natured reader will see in this fact a further explanation of the journal's want of success. However that may be, it was quite certain that the paper must soon cease to be published, and my only choice was between trying to obtain an engagement on some other Liverpool paper and accepting the offer made to me by the conductors of the "Morning Star." I may say that I had made a previous attempt to secure an engagement in London at the suggestion of the celebrated authoress, Harriet Martineau. Miss Martineau was then living in the Lake country, and she had chanced to read an article of mine in a London magazine which she was kind enough to think showed some qualification for better work than that of a reporter on a Liverpool newspaper. She

had a brother-in-law, a distinguished physician then settled in Liverpool, with whom I was well acquainted, and she wrote to him offering to give me an introduction to the editor of the "Daily News," the London journal to which she was then a regular contributor. My pride and delight may be easily imagined when I received this kindly notice from so distinguished a woman as Harriet Martineau. I hurried up to London and presented my literary introduction, but I came at an unlucky time, as the Parliamentary session had begun, and the arrangements for the reporting staff of the "Daily News" were already made. I went back to Liverpool disappointed, indeed, but by no means downcast, for the approval of Harriet Martineau was enough to give me full assurance that I might have some hopes of making my way into London journalism. I never saw Harriet Martineau, but I always regarded her kindly interest in me as the first assuring warrant I had ever received for my literary ambition. To get some place on a London journal was the first step, and I fondly hoped that the rest might come in time. I accepted, therefore, with a gladsome heart the engagement on the "Morning Star," and in the early days of 1860 I became a resident of London.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "MORNING STAR"

THE "Morning Star" was fighting a difficult battle at the time when I became attached to its reporting staff. It was advocating extreme Radical doctrines, was opposed to all wars except such as were purely defensive, condemned the policy of annexation and mere conquest, went in for the removal of all religious disabilities, and stood up for the equal rights of all citizens. It was never what its many opponents insisted on calling it, the "peace at any price" organ, and although it was constantly accused of endeavouring to Americanise British institutions, it carried its Americanising principles only so far as to declare that every man not disqualified by crime was entitled to a free vote in the election of his parliamentary representative, and that the State ought to provide the means for giving education to the poorest of its citizens. The paper was not carried on as a financial speculation, but solely for the purpose of diffusing its own political and economical doctrines; and so long as it was able to pay its way, its leading proprietors would have been well content to carry it on without any prospect of gain. It was the organ

of the party led by Cobden and Bright. Cobden was not a shareholder in the "Morning Star," and Bright only held some shares in the paper as the representative of a near relation. In that capacity Bright had a seat on the board of management and was a frequent visitor to the editorial offices, where he helped to guide, by his personal advice and inspiration, the policy of the journal. When I joined the "Morning Star," its editor was the late Samuel Lucas, a brother-in-law of John Bright, and its business manager was Alfred Hutchinson Dymond, who afterwards won a distinguished position in the Canadian Parliament and finally became the head of a great State institution in Brantford, Canada, for the education of the deaf and dumb. I only remained in the Reporters' gallery for one session, and I was then offered, greatly to my satisfaction, the place of foreign editor — the editor of that part of the journal which had to deal with news from abroad. I had picked up certain literary acquaintance with French, German, Italian, and Spanish; in other words, although I did not profess to speak even French and German with colloquial facility, I could read and translate from the languages I have mentioned with accuracy and ease.

In the mean time I had received very remarkable and wholly unexpected encouragement from a great Englishman whom up to that time I had never seen, John Stuart Mill. It came to pass in

this way. While I was still a reporter in the gallery, I wrote an article of considerable length on "Voltaire's Romances and their Moral," in which I expressed my own views on the subject, and I sent the article to the "Westminster Review," which at that time was exercising a considerable influence among those whom I may describe as advanced thinkers in England and abroad. I sent my article to the "Westminster Review," and I did not know at the time even the name of the editor, Dr. John Chapman, who afterwards became a personal friend of mine. To my great delight and almost equal surprise, the article was at once accepted by the editor, and was published in the next number of the "Review." I thought it a wonderful stroke of success that my very first contribution should be thus welcomed and promptly given to the public. But my feelings cannot easily be told when, shortly after the publication of the number, I received a letter from the editor telling me that John Stuart Mill had written to him expressing his entire approval of my article, and adding a wish to know the name of its author. Mill had at one time been the editor of the "Westminster Review," and he still took a deep interest in its work and progress. No word of encouragement and praise could possibly have been more welcome to me then than the words which came from John Stuart Mill, and I began to believe that the world of literature

was opening up for me. But that was not all. Dr. Chapman invited me to write an article on Buckle's work, "The History of Civilization in England." I attempted the task not without much doubt and misgiving, greatly as my vanity of authorship had been stimulated by Mill's kindly words. Soon after the appearance of the article in print, I received another letter from Dr. Chapman, telling me that "Mill has again given you the garland,"—in other words, that Mill had once again gone out of his way to express his approval of my contribution. My good fortune with these articles won for me the personal acquaintanceship of Mill, who lived so retired a life that he seldom came in the way of making new acquaintances. I received from him much kindness and encouragement, and had the honour of being admitted to the circle of his friends.

My association with the editorial department of the "Morning Star" brought me into close and frequent intercourse with John Bright, and I think I may say that during the remainder of his life I always had the honour of his friendship. Richard Cobden also I came to know and used to meet often. The "Morning Star" went in very much for literary work of all kinds, and had on its staff some men who were already distinguished in the literature of the time. We used to have as a regular institution an afternoon tea at five o'clock every day in the editorial rooms of the "Star,"

and there we talked over and arranged the contents of the next morning's issue and assigned to each writer the work which seemed best suited to him. During those early days on the "Star" I obtained my first and only opportunity of undertaking the work of special correspondent in a foreign country. This was on the coronation of William I., King of Prussia, that Prussian King who was afterwards proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles. The coronation of the new King took place at Königsberg, and for many reasons it was regarded as an event of great importance in the political affairs of Europe. The editor of the "Morning Star" asked me to become its special correspondent and describe the ceremonials in East Prussia, and I accepted the offer with much delight. I had never before visited any part of the Continent, and I felt an especial interest in Germany and the German people, chiefly no doubt because of my love for German literature.

I felt very proud of being chosen for such a duty, and I felt also highly gratified at the opportunity thus given to me to visit a foreign land. I crossed the Channel to Ostend, and there set my foot for the first time on Continental soil. I had taken good care to start in such time as to afford me a chance of seeing all I could along the way. I set out armed with the necessary passports, a very essential provision in those days, and also with letters of introduction from Austen

Henry Layard, who was then under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I went from Ostend to Cologne, where I spent two or three days looking on as much of the Rhine as I could see during the time at my disposal; and although the Rhine is not seen to its best advantage in October, yet it was the Rhine, a river hallowed in my mind by legend and history and poetry, one of the sacred rivers of my dreams. Disraeli, in "Vivian Grey," apostrophizes the Rhine as the "river of my youth," and I think it was the river of our youth to all of us who were still under the influence of Byron and Goethe and Heine. So I gazed upon the Rhine with the eyes of a lover and a worshipper, and then I made my way on to Berlin. Here I had to remain for some days in order to obtain my necessary warrants of admission to the ceremonials at Königsberg, and I spent my time most happily in studying all the places of historic interest in and near the city, wandering in the Thiergarten, and visiting the theatres every evening — a pastime which I must have allowed to myself in any case for the mere pleasure of the thing, but which I told myself was now a necessary part of my duty, as it gave me an opportunity of improving my acquaintance with the German language as spoken. Then came the long and somewhat weary journey to far-off Königsberg — not, however, quite dreary to me, because I loved to see the country we were pass-

ing through, and had some sort of mental association with every town and station through which we passed. The end came at last, and late one evening I reached Königsberg.

The town, as may well be imagined, was crowded to excess with official and other visitors from all parts of the civilized world, and I had the utmost difficulty in obtaining a lodging of any kind. I found a place in the house of a worthy citizen who was making the best possible use of the opportunity to obtain good prices for his rooms. At a rate which might have seemed extravagant for accommodation in a first-class hotel of Berlin or Paris or London, I got the use of one small room during the whole of the coronation and its subsequent festivities in a poor and out-of-the-way quarter of the ancient town. As an illustration of the immense demand for lodgings, I may mention that the bedroom next to mine, the only room then left at the disposal of visitors, was engaged soon after my arrival by a merchant from Berlin, with his wife and his sister-in-law, who were only too glad to get it on any terms. How the three managed to bestow themselves in this one small room I never could understand, but they must have contrived to do it somehow. I believe the merchant, who was a wealthy man, had tried in vain for other rooms anywhere, and was glad at last to get this one enclosure on any terms. I may add that his one room opened out of my one room, and that he

and his wife and his sister-in-law had to pass through my apartment every time they desired to go abroad or to return to their narrow abode. My host was an intelligent man, belonging, like a good many others in Königsberg, to the Jewish faith. He made himself very serviceable to me by acting as my guide to all the most interesting parts of the town and its neighbourhood and showing me with especial interest the places associated with the life of Immanuel Kant. With my early German studies still fresh in my memory, I found the walks associated with Kant more intensely attractive than any other places belonging to the ancient historic city.

When I entered Königsberg, I found the whole place alive with drumming and trumpeting, with discharge of cannon, with marching of troops and processions of citizens. There were public festivities incessantly going on, and through my letters of introduction I obtained invitations to all of these. I was much amused by the grandiloquence of some of the invitation cards I received, in which I found myself set forth as the "High and Well-born Justin McCarthy" and so forth. I need not enter into any description of the coronation ceremonial, which took place in the picturesque old cathedral of Königsberg, further than to mention that the musical service was conducted by the illustrious Meyerbeer in person, who died not quite three years after. The figure of Meyerbeer

was more interesting to me at the time than that of the new sovereign who was destined to become the German Emperor; but there was one other figure in the Königsberg ceremonial which impressed me with a deep and thrilling interest. It was that of the great statesman who was then merely described as Herr von Bismarck. The form of that rising statesman seemed even then to overshadow all others. His very presence had command in it. Bismarck had certainly no claim to be regarded as a handsome man, but he was tall, of almost gigantic mould, and his every movement suggested a sense of conscious authority and power. I had the honour to be presented to him at Königsberg. I found him very genial; he talked freely, and it was an especial relief to me, with my imperfect German, when I found that Bismarck could speak English with perfect fluency and accuracy, although with a very strong German accent. I met Bismarck afterwards during the ceremonials and pageantry at Berlin, and had some opportunities of conversing with him. Like most educated Germans, he was very well acquainted with the great English authors, and his parliamentary speeches were often marked by singularly happy and appropriate quotations from Chaucer and Shakespeare and from living English writers, such as Carlyle and John Stuart Mill. On the whole, this my first visit to Prussia was for me a most interesting, instructive, and happy time, as it well might be, seeing

that it was my introduction to the Rhine and to Bismarck.

Some time after my return to London, my dear old friend Samuel Lucas died prematurely, and I was appointed to fill his vacant place. Thus for the first and last time I became the editor of a London daily newspaper. There was an evening edition of the "Star" called the "Evening Star," and in this evening edition there appeared every day literary articles, many of them humorous, some of them grave and earnest, some picturesque and poetic. Such contributions were not then common in London daily journalism, and they gave to the "Evening Star" a peculiar stamp. We had many contributions sent in by young writers then absolutely unknown to us or to the public, and it was my good fortune to be able to give the first opportunity to some men who afterwards made themselves famous. Among these I may especially mention three names, — the names of William Black, the brilliant novelist, Archibald Forbes, the famous war correspondent, and Richard Whiteing, whose wonderful story "No. 5 John Street" lifted him into a broad bright literary renown, which indeed his previous efforts deserved as well, but for some lack of appreciation on the part of the public had failed to secure. William Black became attached to the editorial staff of the "Morning Star," and held his place, I think, until it ceased to exist. We had many other writers of

fame on the literary staff of the "Star," men like Edmund Yates and Leicester Buckingham, both of whom have long since passed away, but each was a well-known writer when he began to contribute to the "Star," and the editors of that journal could not claim any merit for having recognised their literary capacity. But the "Star" had the great honour of first bringing under the notice of the public the writings of Black, of Forbes, and of Whiteing. I may fairly say that the journal which gave such men their first chance of addressing the world cannot be set down as having lived in vain, and the mere discovery of them alone may well entitle the "Morning Star" to an honourable place in the history of journalism.

An important incident in my journalistic life was my introduction to the personal acquaintanceship of Robert Browning. Tennyson and Carlyle I had already met, although only casually, and I never had anything more than the slightest personal acquaintance with the great poet and the great prose writer. Dickens and Thackeray I had met in the same sort of way, but I was brought somewhat more closely under the notice of Thackeray, and I actually had an invitation to dine with him. The dinner-party, however, to which I had been looking forward with the most intense anticipations of delight, never came off, for Thackeray's sudden death sent a shock through the whole civilized world just before the appointed day.

I was introduced to Robert Browning by John Bright. There was not much political sympathy between a practical Radical orator and statesman like Bright and a poet like Browning, but they were friends nevertheless, and each man was well able to appreciate the genius and sincerity of the other. I published in the "Morning Star" an audacious burlesque on Tennyson's "Northern Farmer," in which Lord Palmerston was made to appear as the Northern Farmer and to talk in his dialect; but the description which the farmer gives of himself and his shrewd purposes was converted into a satire on Palmerston's political projects and his resolve to stick to his ministerial place as long as he lived. Browning was amused, — probably by the reckless absurdity of the satirical transposition, — and he asked Bright whether he knew who had written the lines. Bright said that he could easily find out, and he had no trouble in discovering their author when he next visited the editorial rooms of the "Morning Star." Then Browning sent me a kindly message through Bright, and he gave me an introduction to the poet, whom, as he knew, I admired beyond any other then living. From that time forward I had increasing opportunities of meeting Browning, and our acquaintance lasted until his death.

While I was still editor of the "Star," I made my first effort as the author of a published volume. Up to this time my name as a writer had not be-

come known to the public; for apart from my journalistic work I wrote mostly for quarterly reviews, in which, according to the fashion of those days, the articles never bore the names of their writers. Now I made my first appeal to the public as a novelist. This first novel of mine came into existence under conditions which may be worth a brief notice. My first published novel was not my first attempt at novel writing. While I was still in Liverpool, I had planned out and partly written a story which came into my mind of its own accord and was entirely the child of my fancy. It remained unfinished, and it was not until I had been for some years settled in London that I consulted a publisher about it. This publisher was a very sincere, fair-dealing man, but he did not go in much for the æsthetic or the highest ideals of the author's profession, and he honestly thought that if one writes a book he must naturally want to write a book which the public will buy. I sketched for him in words the story and characters I was working into my unfinished novel, and he shook his head very discouragingly as I went on with my description. He told me that we were living in the reign of the sensation novel, and that a new and totally unknown writer who attempted anything different would have no chance of being read. He did not, however, want to discourage unreservedly my artistic ambition and he suggested a plan by which I might enter Mr. Mudie's

citadel by means of a deceptive flag, if I may employ such a metaphor. He recommended me to go to work and write a thoroughly sensational novel, as sensational as they make or as I could make from beginning to end, and he offered to run the risk of bringing out this novel for me. Thus it would have at least a chance of being read, and even of obtaining a large circle of readers. Then I might go to work at my leisure and bring out the novel which was the child of my own fancy, and this being announced as by the author of the sensational masterpiece might, on the virtue of that introduction, find a large number of readers willing to open its pages. Some of these, no doubt, not finding their nerves thrilled or their hair made to stand on end by any of the opening chapters, would put it aside; but others, having begun to read it, would go on with it and get to like it. At all events, there would be a chance of its obtaining a hearing which otherwise it might never get.

I took my friend's advice and resolved to make a trial at a novel of sensation, with the hope of thereby securing an introduction for the novel of my own choice. So I wrote a sensation story. It opened with a sensation; it ended with a sensation; it was, in fact, all throbbing with sensation. My friendly publisher was as good as his word; he brought it out for me in excellent style, and it really had a sort of success and received some gratifying notices from critical journals. We published on

the principle of sharing profits, and my publisher handed over to me a larger sum of money than I had ever expected to get from the transaction. I may mention the fact that at a later period of my literary career I withdrew this novel from circulation and suppressed it altogether so far as I could, for I did not care to have my name associated with a piece of work which was only done in the hope of catching a passing public fancy. The reader of these pages will see that I am not telling the story of how my first novel came to be born with any design of inducing him or her to send out and buy a copy of it and thus add to its circulation. I went to work at once on another novel, which was not in the least sensational, but yet was not my original effort at writing romance. I felt inclined to put off for a time the completion of my first attempt and to think it over more carefully, while working at another story which had been indirectly suggested to me by events and figures coming within the range of my observation. My postponed story, with its incidents, its figures, and its central idea, was entirely the offspring of my own imagination, and I began to doubt whether I understood the conditions and the surroundings of the story well enough to make it seem like a living reality. I devoted whatever spare time I could to working at the novel which was to be my second published effort in that order of literature. This novel was called "The Waterdale Neigh-

bours," and I believe I may say that it had a distinct success. Then I went back to my first attempt, and it was completed and published under the title of "My Enemy's Daughter." It appeared in the first instance as a serial story in one of the London monthly magazines and at the same time in "Harper's Magazine," New York. My own idea was to call it "A Daughter of Music," but the publisher thought that name had been already used, and at the suggestion of Miss Braddon, one of the most popular novelists then as now, I sent it to the world with the name I have already told. I have often thought that if it were to do again I could have worked out the story more effectively, but I presume this is an idea which has occurred to most novelists after the publication of a favourite story. Anyhow, the book had a public reception favourable enough to encourage me in the belief that I might hold to novel writing as one, at least, of my occupations in life. Between the appearance of "The Waterdale Neighbours" and that of "My Enemy's Daughter," I published a volume of essays chiefly on books and their authors, which appeared under the title of "Con Amore" and received some favourable notices from English critics. The first essay in the volume, that on "Voltaire's Romances," had already received the approval of John Stuart Mill.

The work of him who is editor of a London daily newspaper is one, I need hardly say, of con-

tinual stress and strain. Saturday alone gives to the editor anything like a day of rest in the week. Sunday is as busy as any of the recognised working days, and even on Saturday the editor has much work on hand which he cannot afford to put altogether out of his mind. My principal colleagues in the editing and leader writing of the paper were the sub-editor, Charles Cooper, who not long after became first sub-editor and later on editor of the Edinburgh "Scotsman"; Edward Russell, now Sir Edward Russell, editor of the Liverpool "Daily Post," who was for some time a parliamentary colleague of mine in the House of Commons; Edward D. J. Wilson, now a distinguished writer of leading articles for "The Times"; the late Frederick W. Chesson, deservedly remembered because of his work as Secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society; and some other men whose names I have already mentioned. It was becoming clear to my mind that the editing of a London daily journal was too absorbing and unceasing an occupation to give me much opportunity for my other literary work, and I was becoming anxious to do something in the way of contemporary history and also to see a little of the world. Up to this time I had not been able to do much travel. I had a three weeks' holiday in the autumn of every year, and these holidays I devoted to visiting France, Germany, and Switzerland, but had not yet found time to pay a visit to

Italy and make a study of Rome, Florence, Venice, and Naples. I had a strong desire also to visit the New World and become acquainted with the United States and Canada. I was therefore on the lookout for some favourable opportunity of withdrawing from the unceasing toil of the editorial position, but I was naturally reluctant to give up a certain engagement for mere literary chances. Soon I had a spur to the side of my intent. It was becoming more and more certain that John Bright would have to join a Liberal administration, and Bright himself told me that if or when such an event should come to pass, he would no longer take any part in or exercise any influence over the direction of the "Morning Star." Bright had a strong conscientious conviction that it was not right for a member of an administration to have anything to do with the control of a political newspaper, and I knew well that with him to have a conscientious conviction and to act implicitly upon it were one and the same thing. The bond which mainly held me to the "Morning Star" was my devotion to John Bright and the companionship with him which my position on the paper procured for me. Bright came to my room very often while the House of Commons was sitting. He used to bring me the latest tidings of what was going on in the House, and talk over with me the course which the "Star" ought to adopt as to this or that promised or threatened policy on

the part of Government or Opposition. I had come to regard him as the most valuable and high-minded counsellor, as the most companionable of friends, and to feel honoured and delighted by his confidence. No memories of my life are more sacred to me than the recollections of my long intercourse with John Bright. I felt that when he should cease to have anything to do with the "Star," my principal motive for holding my laborious position would be gone.

When I felt certain that Bright was soon to accept office in a Liberal administration, — and the certainty came to me very soon, — I made up my mind to resign what is called the editorial chair and to try what would come of a visit to the United States. I had hopes that my story passing through "Harper's Magazine" might act as a sort of introduction to the American public, and that I should not appear as an absolute stranger in the literary world of the United States. Another strong and natural influence urging me to my project was the fact that my brother, whom I had not seen for many years, was married happily, and was living with his wife and his children near to the city of New York. Most Irishmen at that time had begun to regard the United States as a sort of second home, and I knew that on going out there I should meet with that brother and his family, whom otherwise I was never likely to see. I resigned my position as editor of the "Morning

Star," and began to make preparation for my first visit to the United States. "Nothing in his life," says Malcolm of Cawdor in "Macbeth," "became him like the leaving it." I may, in a somewhat different sense, employ the same words in regard to my connection with the "Morning Star." Nothing in my occupation of the editorial chair seemed to bring to me so much honour as the fact that I was succeeded in it by so great an author and statesman as John Morley.

My resolve to pay a visit to the United States was supported and stimulated by the advice of some American friends, and especially by the advice of Cyrus W. Field, the celebrated projector of the great scheme for laying a submarine telegraphic cable between England and America. Cyrus Field used to visit England very often while this work was going on, and during his visits he was in the habit of coming to see us very frequently in the editorial rooms of the "Morning Star." I became his friend, and the friendship lasted until his death in 1892. Cyrus Field was of course devoted to the cause of the Northern States, and the "Morning Star" had always upheld that cause at the time when the vast majority of Englishmen who belonged to "society" and the higher classes were decidedly in favour of the South. From Cyrus Field I received a number of letters of introduction to eminent Americans in many parts of the United States, and

much useful advice as to the best way of employing my time during my expedition. My friends got up for me in the kindliest fashion what we should now call "a send-off" in London, a meeting of well-wishers who desired to offer some parting words of encouragement. I remember that the late Hepworth Dixon was one of the speakers, that Cyrus Field spoke, and that my publisher of those days, the late William Tinsley, made what I believe to be his first and only attempt at a public speech on that occasion. I am not likely ever to forget some of the encouraging words spoken then of me, and though I was not vain enough to believe for a moment that I deserved them all, I was none the less touched by their sympathy, their good feeling, and their hope. With my wife and family I left England in the middle of September, 1868, and on board the North German Lloyd steamer Herman I crossed the Atlantic for the first time.

CHAPTER IX

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

When I reached the shores of New York and set foot on the quay at Hoboken, where the steamer Herman landed her passengers, I must frankly confess that my first thoughts were not given to the great city I was about to see, or to the scenery of the broad Hudson River. My feelings were centred for the time on the fact that my brother was waiting on the wharf to give us a welcome. I had not seen him for many years, and we had been playmates from his infancy until the time when the need of striving for a living had impelled him to seek his fortune in the New World. We had gone through much trouble and much happiness together, and during one period of our separation, when I knew that he was serving on the side of the North in the great Civil War, there were gloomy hours in which it seemed to me only too likely that we might never meet again on this earth. Now here we were clasping hands — together once more. I presented him to my wife, and he talked to me of his wife and young children, then in their home not far from New York. He took on himself all the business of our landing,

arranged for the passing of our luggage through the custom house, then and always a difficult piece of business for the stranger to New York, and got us and our belongings into a hackney carriage and drove us to our headquarters in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where we were to take up our residence for the time. Even as we drove there I hardly looked at the streets through which we passed, and paid little attention to the fact that we were mounting up Broadway, so much engrossed were we all in asking and answering questions about our families and our living and lost friends. We had not been long in the hotel before my brother's young wife came to see us, and between her and me there began a brotherly and sisterly affection which must live with our lives and beyond them.

New York has changed much in size and outward appearance since those distant days of my first acquaintance with it. It has immensely outgrown its limits of that time. Houses and streets which used to be described then as "up-town" are now regarded as rather "down-town." The Fifth Avenue Hotel was the very centre of the city's fashionable region, and now New York extends for miles and miles into what was then but park and open country. There were no electric tramways in the city when I first knew it; there was no elevated railway; and I need hardly say that there were no motor-cars or bicycles. Far down-

town towards the Wall Street region and the ferries, Broadway was spanned at its widest part by a great iron bridge. Even at that time, before the incursion of the electric cars, it was thought highly convenient to have that bridge as a safe and easy means by which passengers might cross from one side of the street to the other without peril to life or limb. In my wanderings down-town I made much use of this bridge, but rather as an observatory than as a means of transit. I used to spend delightful moments leaning over the railings of the bridge and watching the rivers of traffic flowing up and down Broadway. The whole life of New York appeared to move up and down under my eyes as I stood and gazed. No other city I had ever looked upon could have offered me such an opportunity for surveying its movements. New York was not built up in successive communities or cities as London was, in which the different communities or cities gradually grew into one another and formed a coherent metropolis. New York was built upon a comparatively narrow island, and for a long time did not extend on either side beyond the island's limits. The whole growth of the city was therefore up-town. Broadway was the central street, and the great avenues of which Fifth Avenue made the elegant and fashionable region ran parallel with Broadway on either side. Standing on this Broadway bridge, one could see the whole business

world of New York moving up and down. Every man, woman, or child who had anything to do in the way of actual city business, outside the realms of millinery and such like crafts, had to move into Broadway in order to accomplish the desired purpose. No view of London or Paris, of Rome or Constantinople, is to be had from one particular point of the city at all comparable in its comprehensiveness with the view of New York that could be seen from the bridge whereon I used to stand so often in those far-off days. It was a source of real regret to me that before my first visit to the United States had come to a close, the shopkeepers in the lower part of the city had made up their minds that the bridge was a mere nuisance to traffic, and after much agitation prevailed upon the local authorities to remove it altogether. When I next returned to New York, I mourned over the bridge as over a lost friend.

I presented my letters of introduction and was received with great kindness and hospitality. One of the letters from Cyrus Field was to William Cullen Bryant, the venerable poet, who had many circles of devoted admirers in Great Britain and Ireland. It was still early autumn, and Bryant was living at his beautiful country place, Roslyn, on Long Island. When he got my letter, he came to see us at once, and not merely invited us to his Long Island home, but positively insisted,

in his kindly and genial way, that he must carry us off for a few days' sojourn with him, and we were only too well pleased to be ruled by his hospitable pressure. My wife and I spent several days with him at Roslyn, — the first American country house we ever visited, — and most delightful days they were in every sense. The poet's daughter Julia kept house for him and was a most charming hostess. Bryant loved to show us his gardens, his flowers, his fruits, his favourite trees, and the many picturesque views which could be enjoyed from rising grounds in the neighbourhood. He must have been then some seventy-five years of age, but he was as quick and ready in his movements as if he had not passed middle life, and despite his white hair, his long white beard, and bald forehead, he seemed to carry with him something like the elasticity of perpetual youth. He took much pleasure also in showing us his library, and in talking over his books and exchanging ideas with us on all manner of literary subjects.

Bryant had travelled much in Europe and the East, and had visited England several times. He was one of the most variously educated men it has ever been my good fortune to meet. His classical scholarship was of the highest order, and I think his translation of the "Iliad" one of the best English versions ever produced. He was intimately acquainted with the literature of France,

Germany, Italy, and Spain, and could speak the languages of these countries with perfect fluency and with remarkable accuracy. I may mention that at a later period of my acquaintance with Bryant, the poet presided at a dinner given at Delmonico's Restaurant to a number of distinguished foreign visitors who had come to New York, if I remember rightly, on the occasion of some international exhibition. Bryant had to introduce by a speech of his own each toast proposing the health of a foreign guest. He spoke, according as the toast suggested, in the language of the country from which the guest had come, and he seemed to captivate the several nationalities by his linguistic skill, as well as by his natural gift of eloquence.

During the winter months Bryant occupied a house in the fashionable part of New York, and there with his daughter he had a brilliant reception every week, at which one was sure to meet the most distinguished representatives of art, letters, and political life, American and foreign, who happened then to be in the city. I was present at many of these receptions, and I have seldom spent pleasanter hours than those at his house. Bryant gave me later on a fine photograph of his own noble head and face, with his autograph on its margin, and that most valued picture still forms a conspicuous ornament of the study where I work. The house of William Cullen Bryant gave

me my first introduction to social life in New York city.

One of the distinguished men whom I met for the first time in Bryant's home was the scholar and author, the late George Ripley, who had in his earlier days been associated with Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and others in establishing that colony of Brook Farm the memory of which Hawthorne has embodied and made immortal in his "Blithedale Romance." If there were nothing else to make me feel glad in my meeting with Ripley, the mere fact of his association with that book and with the gifted and philanthropic group of authors, poets, and dreamers pictured so exquisitely in its pages would have been enough to make me regard him with the deepest interest; but George Ripley was, for his own sake alone, a man whom everybody must have been delighted to meet. He was deeply read in literature and in history, and was in every sense the most charming companion. I came to know him well during my first visit to the United States, and I am glad to believe that he reckoned me among his friends.

Another eminent American of a somewhat different order whom I knew intimately was the late Horace Greeley, editor and chief owner of the New York "Tribune," a journal which then exercised, as it now exercises, the most important influence over public opinion in America. My

wife and I were frequent visitors in Horace Greeley's home, and we could not but regard him with the highest respect and admiration. He was a very different sort of man from Bryant or Ripley; he was not much of a classical student, and did not claim any high culture, or indeed any great interest in literature or art. He was eccentric in his habits as well as in his manners; he never went in for the ways of society; and he was an uncompromising teetotaller. He dressed in the most careless way, and never concerned himself about the fashion of the passing season. He often spoke out his opinions on various subjects with a frankness which took little account of the prejudices or susceptibilities of his listeners. But he was a man of the purest and noblest character; he was absolutely sincere and disinterested in all the ways and acts of his private life, and when once he had formed a decided opinion on some great public question, he was ready to back up that opinion with all that he was worth. He was above all things a politician — I mean in the higher sense, and not in that narrower sense which has lately applied the term for the most part to men who make politics their business and their trade. Greeley was as conscientious and as resolute in the maintenance of his convictions as John Bright or Richard Cobden, and, as might have been expected, he made many enemies and suffered many losses during this or that national

crisis; but he held his way undaunted and followed only his inner guiding light. There were many public questions on which I could not agree with him, but I found none the less interest in talking them over with him and listening to his original and striking manner of enforcing and illustrating his views, and he often threw off on the spur of the moment phrases and sentences which would have been worthy of Benjamin Franklin. I heard him speak at many public meetings, and although he had not the slightest pretension to be classed among orators, yet he could always command profound attention by the homespun simplicity and at the same time the curious felicity of his ideas and his language.

Greeley's manner of getting through his work as the editor of a great daily newspaper amused and interested me much, it was so entirely unlike the methods of English journalism. The editor of a London daily newspaper lives in a sort of sanctuary, which is not to be approached without due notice and careful previous arrangement by any but his working colleagues. While Greeley was in the editorial room of the New York "Tribune," he was ready to see any one who called at the outer office and expressed a wish to say something to him. One might, in fact, walk in unannounced, and if Greeley was at the moment engaged in throwing off a leading article he would get up from his unfinished work, hear what the

stranger had to say, give him a reply, and then go on with his task as if nothing had intervened to put him out. Everybody knew Horace Greeley, and the very oddity of his ways made him all the more an object of interest. He was pointed out to the stranger visiting New York as one of the institutions, or perhaps I should say the curiosities of New York, and all sorts of humorous stories were in circulation concerning his eccentricities, his dogmas, his likings and dislikings, and his frequent bursts of generosity. To the influences of society Horace Greeley was wholly indifferent. His likings and dislikings were purely personal or political, and had nothing to do with class or station. Although the most austere of teetotallers, he could enjoy a pleasant dinner or supper party if he liked the folks who were brought together, and however he may have condemned in his conscience what our poets once used to call the "flowing bowl," he could converse in the friendliest fashion with his friends even while they were doing full justice to the dryest of champagne. There was one thing to be said about Horace Greeley, and that was that he did not recall to mind anybody else whom one had ever met; and I think there was another thing to be said about him also, that it was impossible, after coming to know him, not to feel a sincere admiration for him.

Another celebrated American public man whom

I met for the first time in New York was Charles Sumner, so long distinguished as the great orator of negro emancipation. Sumner was not to be seen habitually in New York city, for he usually lived in Boston, the place of his birth, and when Congress was in session he was always to be found in or near the Senate Chamber in Washington. But of course he often came to New York, and it was there that I first had an opportunity of meeting him and forming a friendship with him. Charles Sumner was, I think, the most impressive figure so far as physical attributes were concerned among the public men of his time. He was very tall, was powerfully built, and had a handsome face. In stature and proportions he often reminded me of Bismarck; but Sumner was a very handsome man, which Bismarck certainly was not. I had brought him a letter of introduction from John Bright. This in itself would have secured me a cordial reception from Sumner. The two men had alike advocated the cause of negro emancipation while that great reform had yet to be struggled for, and Bright had been a most powerful and eloquent champion during the American Civil War of that Northern cause to which Sumner on the other side of the Atlantic was devoting his best energies. I met Sumner many times in Boston and in Washington, and he was the first man who brought me into sight of the meetings of the Senate in the Capitol.

I may mention appropriately here that on one occasion while the Senate was not actually sitting Sumner showed me the place where, many years before, he had been assaulted and struck down in the Senate Chamber by a Southerner, Preston Brooks, because of a speech he had made denouncing slavery and its advocates. The assault created an immense sensation throughout the whole of the civilized world, but at the present moment it has probably passed out of the memory of many of my readers. I bring it up anew for an especial reason of my own. In my "Reminiscences" I mention the fact that Sumner himself showed me the place where the attack was made on him — it was in the old Senate Chamber and not that at present in use. Until I had heard Sumner's own explanation, I could not understand how a man of his powerful build could have been stricken down by an attack, however sudden, from an assailant of ordinary physical strength. Sumner explained to me that the attack was made on him while he was alone in the chamber after the sitting had been concluded, and was seated at his desk writing letters. His knees were under this heavy solid desk, and when he endeavoured to spring to his feet he was kept down by the desk, and his enemy struck him blow after blow, until he fell senseless.

I may quote the words in which I told the story of that assault: —

"Sumner had made in the Senate an attack on the advocates of that Southern policy which was destined to bring on, and by some was even designed to bring on, the Civil War. A member of the Southern party named Preston Brooks made a fierce attack on Sumner in the Senate house itself, struck him several blows on the head with a bludgeon, and left him lying senseless on the ground. The assailant received the applause of unthinking people in the Southern States, and was presented with a testimonial in the form of a gold-headed cane professing to come from certain Southern ladies in recognition of the manner in which he had advocated the cause of the South. Sumner was for a long time incapacitated from taking any part in public affairs by the injuries which he had received. His assailant offered him the satisfaction of a duel, but Sumner was on principle an uncompromising opponent of the duelling system, and indeed was an unqualified opponent of war, whether public or private, unless in the form of absolute self-defence."

Some three years after the publication of my "Reminiscences," I received a letter from a Southern lady, couched in language the most courteous to me, but urging that I had given an incorrect and misleading view of the conduct of Preston Brooks, and enclosing a letter from the son of Sumner's assailant which, according to her con-

viction, gave an accurate and authentic account of the whole affair. It is only fair that I should quote the passages from the letter of Mr. Brooks, the son, which profess to give the correct version. Mr. Brooks says: "The fact is, my father waited until the Senate adjourned and all the ladies had left, and then went up to Mr. Sumner and told him he had read his speech as dispassionately as possible, and that, in consideration of the language he had used against his kinsmen, his State, and his country, he deemed it necessary to chastise him. Sumner did not try to resist it." Then the writer says that the weapon Preston Brooks used was not a bludgeon, but a light cane, which he, the writer, has seen many times. "It is a small gutta-percha cane, hollow from end to end, and running to a point, not thicker than a lady's little finger, and being so frail it broke after a lick or two. He never hit Sumner with the large end, but used it as he would have used a cow-hide." Then Mr. Brooks goes on to justify the assault because of the vehement attack which Sumner had made upon the Southern States and their systems, but into this question it is not necessary for me to go. The point of the contradiction consists in the statement that Preston Brooks did not use a bludgeon or a heavy weapon of any kind, but merely a light gutta-percha cane, and on this question I am willing to give to the memory of Preston Brooks the full benefit of the

doubt. I took my description of the scene and the weapon from what I had read in books and newspapers, and it appears to be, at all events, quite certain that Sumner was for a considerable time prevented from taking any part in public affairs by the effect of the injuries which he had received. None the less, I am perfectly willing to take this the first effective opportunity I have had to give to the public that version of the story which is vouched for by the son of Preston Brooks. What is certain is that there was an assault, and that the assault was severe enough to reduce to insensibility a man of herculean stature and strength. The whole incident of course is one which seems very shocking to human feelings now, whether these feelings belong to Europeans or Americans, but when we remember a certain encounter of fisticuffs which took place in the House of Commons in 1893, we in England ought perhaps to be somewhat restrained in our expressions of horror and disgust at the idea of an assault taking place in a legislative chamber. It has to be remembered, at all events, that the business of the sitting had come to a close before the assault on Charles Sumner was committed, whereas the House of Commons, on the occasion to which I refer, was in the midst of its parliamentary work when the free fight broke out.

Charles Sumner was one of the great orators whom it has been my good fortune to hear. I do

not reckon him as amongst the very greatest of these, for I do not think he had the noble and majestic simplicity, the poetic feeling, and the exquisitely melodious voice of John Bright, and I do not think he sounded the various notes of human feeling with the rapid and unfailing touch which was the characteristic of Gladstone. I shall also have to say presently that there was another distinguished American orator who commanded my admiration more completely than Sumner could do. But Sumner must, according to my judgment, take rank unquestionably among great orators as distinguished from great declaimers or great debaters. He was a man of deep and varied studies, historical, legal, and literary. He had, during his earlier life, travelled much in Europe, had indeed spent some years there as a student, and he was well acquainted with England. He had been called to the Bar, but very soon gave up all idea of practising and devoted himself to the more congenial work of political reform. He was more profoundly read in English history than almost any Englishman with whom I have conversed on such subjects, and I remember that in some instances he pointed out what he declared to be errors in our recognised works on English history, and he was able to refer me to authentic and state-preserved evidence of which I had known nothing before — evidence which absolutely established the justice of his criticism. He loved the

great literature of England and was thoroughly familiar with its noblest productions, whether of early days or later. During all the earlier part of his career Sumner had an intense love for everything in England, — everything at least which he regarded as characteristically English, — the scenery of the land, its historic memories, its poetry, and its prose. The abolition of slavery in England and English colonies through the efforts of British philanthropy established a new claim on his sympathies and his admiration, and he might be said to have taken for his creed on that subject the doctrines expounded and brought into legislation by such Englishmen as Wilberforce. But at the time when I came to know Charles Sumner his feelings towards the mother country had undergone a severe change. He could not but see that throughout the whole of the struggle in the United States between North and South, the sympathies of the great majority belonging to "society" in England had gone with the Southerners, who broke into rebellion with the hope of maintaining slavery. His old love for England was profoundly shaken by the disappointment thus brought upon him, and changed at last into something like a feeling of hatred. I had many conversations with him on this subject, and while I thoroughly agreed with him in condemning the sentiment and the policy of the ruling classes in England with regard to the Civil War, I did my best to explain that on

slavery, as on so many other questions, the ruling classes did not represent the feelings of the majority of Englishmen. I pointed out to him that the greatest leaders of thought in England, the best writers and the best speakers, the leaders of the English democracy, and the whole mass of the English workingmen, had remained constant to anti-slavery principles, and gave their best wishes for the success of the Northern cause. I dwelt upon the fact that men like Cobden and Bright, John Stuart Mill and Goldwin Smith, had held firmly to their convictions, and that these men were rewarded by the love and admiration of all but a small and circumscribed minority of Englishmen everywhere. He listened to all my arguments with unvarying patience and good temper, and fully admitted the force of the facts I brought to his notice; but he still insisted that those whom the English people had made their official representatives were for the most part sympathisers and avowed sympathisers with the Southern States, and were willing that slavery should abide forever in America, rather than see the defeat of the Southern gentlemen by the Northern traders. It seemed to me as if the very intensity of his former love for England only served to make the bitterness of his disappointment turn into something like a deceived lover's hatred for the former object of his adoration. I thought him unreasonable, but I could not fail to understand the inner meaning

of his sentiments, and I felt that every allowance must be made for the sudden change which had come over his feelings towards the old country.

Another great anti-slavery advocate whom I met for the first time in New York was Wendell Phillips. I afterwards met him very often in Boston, the city of his birth. Wendell Phillips was for many years the most distinguished and effective among abolitionist orators. He was a man of high culture and refined tastes, and the sincerity of his devotion to every great cause he advocated became with him a positive passion. He would hear of no compromise; he could make no allowance for the early training, the prejudices, and the sincere although perverse convictions of his opponents. He was as unconditional a champion of total abstinence from alcoholic drinks as he was of negro emancipation, and he could hold no parley with any proposal for lowering his standard in either cause. Unlike Horace Greeley, who was also a convinced teetotaller, Wendell Phillips would not consent to make one of any social gathering where wine or spirits or beer came on the table. This resolve was all the more regretted by his friends inasmuch as he was the most delightful companion and a fascinating talker. He was an advocate of universal peace, and I think that in this doctrine he went much farther than Cobden or Bright would have done; for he had little sympathy with a policy of war even when that policy

might have been plausibly vindicated as a mere necessity of self-defence. I heard him once declare in a speech of thrilling eloquence that the reign of the Anglo-Saxon, in which description he included his own Americans, had been for the most part little better than "a drunken revel of blood."

I have always regarded Wendell Phillips as one of the greatest orators I ever heard, and I should rank him as a public speaker with Bright and Gladstone. He seemed to me to have a fluency equal to Gladstone's, and at the same time a simplicity of diction which might well be compared with that leading quality in the eloquence of Bright. Wendell Phillips had two distinct fields for the display of his powers as a speaker. He was universally acknowledged to be the most popular lecturer of his time, and then, as since, the lecturer had a sway over audiences in the United States such as he can hardly be said to have ever held in England. Wendell Phillips lectured on all manner of topics, — literature, politics, travel, social life and morals, — and he could always suit his style and his manner to the nature of his subject and the capacity of his audience. His lectures might generally be described as easy, colloquial and yet brilliant talk, put into the simplest and easiest form of words, and yet thrilling in every sentence with a force and fervour which kept his listeners in breathless attention. But when he spoke from a

public platform to a vast crowd on some great political subject, he then became the genuine orator, and his impassioned sentences swept like electric fire over the assembly he had gathered around him. Even on such occasions, however, the great speaker never sacrificed any of the pure simplicity belonging to his natural style. He may have indulged not uncommonly in extravagance of eulogy or extravagance of condemnation, but there was nothing hyperbolical in the language which clothed his eulogy or his censure. His voice was remarkably powerful and was at the same time singularly melodious in its tone, and yet he never seemed, even when addressing the most crowded assembly, to be putting any strain upon his lungs or making an unusual effort. One who had only heard him deliver lectures might never have known what strength and volume belonged to that voice which could upon ordinary occasions and when speaking from the platform of some literary association discourse with such charming simplicity and with such exquisite ease of modulation.

I had heard Wendell Phillips deliver several lectures before I had an opportunity of listening to him as a great orator addressing a large and tumultuous meeting. The first time I heard him deliver a speech of this kind was at a vast meeting held in the Cooper Institute, New York. It was a meeting at which several other speakers as well as Wendell Phillips were to be heard. The

hall was crowded to excess, and I happened to be a little late in my arrival, so that I was not able to get any further than the steps of one of the openings into the room, and I could not see the speakers or even the platform. The speaker addressing the meeting at the time of my arrival spoke with what appeared to me to be one of the finest and most powerful voices I had ever heard. It never occurred to me for the moment that the owner of this superb voice was no other than Wendell Phillips himself. Such, however, proved to be the fact, and it was my first experience of the difference in voice between Wendell Phillips the lecturer and Wendell Phillips the orator. Not often do we find in public life a man who can win success both as a lecturer and as a political orator, but Wendell Phillips was equally a power on one platform and the other. I have never known a man more thoroughly unselfish and more absolutely devoted to a great cause. He never sought any personal advantage or distinction. He refused to enter into what we call the game of politics, and never put himself in the way of obtaining any of the administrative offices which are the prize of the politician in America, in England, and in most other countries. He was a man of considerable private fortune, and made much money by his lectures, but he devoted the best part of his worldly possessions with lavish hand to the promotion of the great philanthropic cause he had at heart. It was a high privilege to

know such a man, and I must ever remember with pride that he treated me as a friend.

William Lloyd Garrison, another famous leader of the movement for the abolition of slavery, also became known to me for the first time in New York. Garrison had not anything like the eloquence of Wendell Phillips, or his literary culture, but he brought to the cause he advocated an indomitable resolve and a powerful capacity for commanding attention. He had risked his life again and again at a time and in places when the denunciation of the slavery system surrounded him with reckless and pitiless enemies. He had been prosecuted and imprisoned for writings and speeches assailing the party which was then most powerful in the United States, he had been threatened with assassination, and, even in Boston, he had been subjected to personal violence; but no threats and no dangers could ever turn him from his self-appointed task. He visited Great Britain several times, and won hosts of admirers and supporters there. During his last stay in London he was entertained at a great public banquet, where many of the most eminent Englishmen of the time were present. I am now, however, only thinking of him as I knew him in the United States, when the work which he had helped so materially had accomplished its full success, and the one great purpose of his life had become by its accomplishment his highest and most treasured reward.

Among the distinguished men whom I met during my first visit to New York was George William Curtis, the author, journalist, and lecturer — one of the most charming writers and fascinating speakers then in the United States. Curtis ranked among the most successful literary lecturers of that time, and I never missed an opportunity of hearing him whenever I had the chance. I shall never forget the manner in which during one of his lectures he quoted that touching and noble lyric by Arthur Hugh Clough, "Green Fields of England." I thought at the time that any Englishman, however proud and fond of his country's associations and scenery, must have found a new thrill of patriotic feeling pass through him and a new inspiration given to him by listening to those lines as they came with such exquisite music and modulation from the lips of an American. I had many opportunities of meeting and conversing with Curtis during my first stay in New York and afterwards, and I never met him without feeling all the better and the brighter for his thoughts and his expressions.

Another American friend was Bayard Taylor, the poet, novelist, and traveller. Bayard Taylor was among the first of the distinguished travellers who devoted themselves to the task, not of mere exploration, but of the literary and poetic illumination of far-off foreign scenes. He had a passion for travel, and was able to indulge himself in

his favourite pastime by the descriptive sketches which he sent home to American newspapers and magazines. He paid his way after this fashion, and it may fairly be said of him that the traveller touched no subject which he did not adorn. He wandered over many regions in Asia and Africa, some of which have been made more familiar to the world since his time by other travellers, but which were almost unknown to Europe and America until Bayard Taylor had found his way into them and described what he had seen. Bayard Taylor wrote many volumes of poetry, as well as novels and books of travel, and he made what I believe to be the first complete translation into English of Goethe's "Faust." Up to the publication of that volume the English reader, if unacquainted with German, had to be content with that first part of the poem which ends in the fate of Gretchen. Bayard Taylor, like every true lover of Goethe, regarded such a way of dealing with "Faust" as absolutely misleading and even intolerable, spoiling the whole narrative and purpose of the immortal drama. He was greatly devoted to German literature, and I remember having had many lively disputes with him as to the merits of some of the modern German poets. There were poems of Freiligrath, for instance, which he greatly disparaged, and which I warmly admired, and over these we had occasionally lively interchange of argument. But we were thoroughly agreed in our

estimate of the great classic German poets, and in the conviction that "Faust" can no more be appreciated by reading what is called its first part than "Macbeth" could be appreciated if we were to read no more of it after Duncan had been done to death.

Let it be remembered that with all his work as a world-traveller, a writer of poems, a writer of novels, and a translator, Bayard Taylor kept up his regular and continuous labour as a journalist. I have seldom met with any one who compressed so much variety of work, and most of it brilliant work, into the compass of a life which yet found ample time for healthful exercise and for amusement. Such English books as I had read at home about life in American cities did not prepare me for a man like Bayard Taylor. Nor did the descriptions I had found of American journalists in one at least of Charles Dickens's novels, and in other novels by English writers who tried to catch the spirit of Dickens, lead me to expect that I should find among professional writers for the press in New York such a man as Whitelaw Reid, who was one of my earliest acquaintances in the United States.

When I first came to New York, Whitelaw Reid had but lately settled in the city, and was attached to the literary staff of Horace Greeley's "Tribune." Whitelaw Reid had come to New York from Cincinnati, if I remember rightly, and had obtained

an engagement from Horace Greeley, who was quick to appreciate the varied talents of the young man. Whitelaw Reid was then but a young man, and was just opening his brilliant career in journalism. He was a singularly handsome man, charming in his manners and in his conversation. He soon proved himself master of a literary style which won for him a high reputation all over the United States. I had met him very often during my first visit to America, and at each of my later visits I felt an increasing personal pleasure in hearing of the success he had steadily won and had well deserved. His name has since become known all over the civilised world. After the death of Horace Greeley he succeeded to the position of chief editor of the "Tribune," and, as often happens in the United States, his splendid services as a journalist won for him an opportunity for which he had never sought — the opportunity of holding one of the highest positions in diplomacy. Whitelaw Reid represented for a long time the United States Government in the capital of the French Republic. Since that time he has twice been special envoy to the British Court on important occasions, and in both instances he won the confidence and the admiration of all who had the opportunity of observing the manner in which he discharged his duties. If an English comic writer who had drawn his ideas of American life from "Martin Chuzzlewit," for instance, were to evolve from his moral

consciousness the idea of a successful American journalist, he would have pictured a man as strikingly unlike Whitelaw Reid in every quality and feature as it is possible to imagine. Whitelaw Reid is a man of high culture and varied ability, of refined and polished manners, a political writer of great power and penetration, a man to be welcomed by scholars and diplomatists. I was indebted to him for many kindnesses while I was in New York, and I cannot perhaps express more emphatically the high opinion I had formed of him from the first than when I say that his later success in journalism and in diplomacy brought no feeling of surprise to me.

CHAPTER X

MY LIFE IN AMERICA

MEANWHILE I was settling down into something like regular work in literature and journalism. I had been welcomed to a place in the editorial rooms of the New York "Independent," and I attended there for several days in each week, wrote articles on the political affairs of England, and gave my advice and suggestions on various subjects of European interest. I shall always have the most pleasing recollections of my association with "The Independent," and even at the present time I am a contributor to its pages. Charles Sumner was a frequent visitor to the editorial rooms, because the paper represented on all or almost all important questions the opinions he had ever advocated. I contributed several leading articles to the New York "Tribune," and I came into friendly relations with the leading members of the firm of Harper & Brothers, a firm which then as now were the publishers of several magazines and weekly periodicals. I had sent on chance a short story to one of the Harper magazines. The story made its appearance in due course, and procured for me a friendly invitation to pre-

sent myself at the office of the magazine. I have already said that one of my novels came out as a serial in " Harper's Monthly." I had a very pleasant talk with the leading member of the firm, and he suggested that I should enter into an agreement with him to write a number of short stories, to be printed in some of his many publications. The invitation was very acceptable to me, as I had already been paid well for the one short story I had sent in, and I asked how many stories of the same kind he wished me to write. I was somewhat astonished, and still more gratified, when he told me that he should like me to send him, at all events, a hundred stories of the same order. I hope I retained a perfect composure when I received this astonishing invitation, and conducted myself as if it were but an ordinary event in the course of my literary life. So we agreed that one hundred short stories were to be expected from me, and that I might work them off according as it suited my convenience. The offer was particularly welcome to me just then, because I had made up my mind to travel through the United States as much as possible, and I saw the great advantage of being able to pay a good part of my travelling expenses by my casual contributions to the Harper periodicals.

In course of time I completed my contract, and sent in stories to the Harpers from resting-places in the United States as widely distant from each

other as New York and San Francisco, Minneapolis and New Orleans. Whenever, during my journeyings, I stayed for a few days in any place, I found time to get through a short story and send it to the publishers in New York. Many of my tales and sketches were done in England after my return there from my first and second visits to the United States, but I may say that I completed my appointed task in due time, and I have ever since been in the most friendly relations with the firm of Harper & Brothers, who have given to the American public many of my novels and historical works.

I was anxious to become, during my stay in America, as well acquainted as possible with the life and ways of the United States, and I made my appearance on many political and literary platforms when some question was under discussion on which a visitor from England might be entitled to form and express an opinion. In one instance I went so far as to deliver a lecture in the Cooper Institute, New York, on the manner in which public opinion throughout England had manifested itself during the American Civil War. There was, at that time, much bitterness still prevailing in the Northern States because of the manner in which England was believed to have acted during that struggle. The people of the Northern States had been compelled to see that the English Government had not shown itself very

friendly to the cause of the Union; that for a considerable time cruisers had been built in English ports for the Confederates, and allowed to go to sea for the purpose of preying on the merchant shipping of the North; and that most of the London newspapers were active champions of the Southern rebels. The impression went abroad throughout the Northern States that the English people as a whole were hostile to the maintenance of the Union, and this was exactly the impression I wished, if possible, to remove. I delivered my lecture to a crowded audience, at which many of the leading citizens of New York were present, and I made it my purpose to show that audience, as I had tried to show Charles Sumner, that the great majority of the English people were from first to last in full sympathy with the cause of the Union and with the anti-slavery movement; that the working classes everywhere held the same views; that the most intellectual and highly educated Englishmen, such as John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, were earnest and consistent supporters of the Northern cause, and that some of the most popular and influential orators and statesmen in England — Cobden and Bright, for instance — were on the same side, and that English public opinion could not be regarded as fairly represented in any sense by the men in political office and by the classes who form "society." I explained to my audience that the very same lead-

ers of administration, and of political and social cliques, who were hostile to the cause of the North were equally hostile to every measure for the political emancipation of the working classes in Great Britain and Ireland. The cause for which I was pleading was that of the great majority of Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen, who up to that time were allowed no constitutional means of giving force to their opinions on questions of public interest.

I felt a reasonable hope that my endeavour to render justice to the great majority of the English people would come with all the more effect from me because it was well known to my American audience that I was a devoted Nationalist in the cause of Ireland, and could not be suspected of having any extravagant admiration for England as the ruling power of my country. I have reason to believe that the lecture accomplished to some extent, at least, the purpose I had in view, and induced many among my audience to understand that the action of an English administration could not at that time always be regarded as representing the general opinions of the English people. One result of this my first discourse from a public platform in America was that it procured for me a number of invitations to deliver lectures on other subjects, in other cities, and during my second winter in the United States I delivered a large number of lectures on various topics in different

cities and towns. At a later period I delivered lectures during the whole of two successive seasons in many parts of the United States, and thus obtained very instructive and gratifying opportunities of making myself better acquainted with America, its scenery, and its audiences. In the mean time I was working at a novel, chiefly descriptive of American life in the Atlantic States and in San Francisco, which appeared as a serial in "The Galaxy." Although the novel appeared in an English edition, I afterwards withdrew it from circulation, for the reason chiefly that it seemed to me neither quite a story nor quite a book of travel, but only an unsatisfactory attempt at a combination of the two.

During this first visit of mine to the United States I did a good deal of travelling, and enjoyed it much. One of my expeditions took me to Salt Lake City, where Brigham Young then presided as prophet and ruler over the Mormon community. At that time there was no branch line connecting the Mormon city with the great Pacific Railway, then not long opened, and we had to make a considerable journey by stage-coach from the nearest station on the line to our resting-place by the shore of the great Salt Lake. We interrupted our journeys, whether by rail or road, at every available halting-place, partly to avoid the fatigue of a long continuous journey and partly because we thus secured all the better chance of making our-

selves acquainted with the regions through which we were passing. We made a considerable stay in Salt Lake City, where I formed the acquaintance of Brigham Young; but as I have said a good deal about our experiences of the place and the people in other books of mine, I shall not repeat my descriptions here. Up to this time I had not entered upon engagements as a public lecturer, and therefore our goings and comings were regulated solely by our own ideas as to the places we ought to visit. I kept up all the time my work as a writer of short stories for the Harpers, and as a contributor to "The Independent" and "The Galaxy."

In 1870 I made a flying visit to England, and arrived there just in time to become absorbed in the interest created in the outbreak of the great war between France and Prussia, which ended in the fall of the French Empire and of Louis Napoleon. During my comparatively short stay in London at this exciting time I began my connection with the "Daily News" as a writer of leading articles, a connection which lasted with little interruption for more than quarter of a century. The editor of the "Daily News" at the time when I joined the literary staff was Mr. Frank Harrison Hill, whom I then met for the first time, and who is one of my dearest friends at the present day. Frank Harrison Hill is one of the most brilliant political writers of his time. His volume entitled

"Political Portraits," and his masterly satire "The Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield," would of themselves entitle him to a place in the front rank of high-cultured, keen, and animated essayists. Hill had only just become editor-in-chief of the "Daily News" at that time, and I suppose, like most editors, he was anxious to bring some new contributors to the work of the journal, and therefore invited me to become a writer of leading articles. I accepted the invitation very gladly, with the understanding that it was not to interfere with my coming visit to the United States. I found my old friend and former newspaper colleague, William Black, a member of the "Daily News" editorial staff, and before very long another of my former colleagues, Richard Whiteing, was one of my fellow-workers.

The business manager of the "Daily News" was the late John R. Robinson, who was more recently known as Sir John R. Robinson, but who had not obtained any recognition of his valuable public services at the time when I first came to know him. J. R. Robinson always seemed to me the very ideal of a successful newspaper manager. He had a marvellous eye for the discovery of new regions in which the Special Correspondent could arouse the attention of the world, and he had a wonderful faculty for discerning in men the qualities which make successful War Correspondents. He gave Archibald Forbes, one of the most renowned

among the masters of that craft, the first opportunity of proving his marvellous capacity. One of the contributors to the "Daily News" at that time was Mr. Edward F. S. Pigott, who afterwards held the official position of Examiner of Plays, and who was one of the most accomplished and well-read men and one of the brightest talkers I have ever known. My friendship with Pigott lasted until his too early death. A distinguished Frenchman once told me that the late Lord Granville and Edward Pigott were the only two Englishmen he knew who could talk French so well as to be taken in Paris for Frenchmen. Edward Pigott was a great friend of George Eliot, and of her first husband, George Henry Lewes, and it was through him that I came to know that gifted pair, and to be a frequent visitor at George Eliot's Sunday afternoon receptions in their home, The Priory, Regent's Park.

I wrote many leading articles for the "Daily News" during my short visit to London, chiefly on the subject of the war then going on between France and Prussia. The "Daily News" did not pledge itself to any actual partisanship in the great struggle between these rival powers — rival powers of whom Prévost-Paradol, the distinguished French diplomatist, had already said with such apt expression that they were like two express trains started at the same moment from either end of the same railway line, and destined therefore to come into

collision. The more general impression in England at first was that France would be the conqueror, but the "Daily News" judged differently, and maintained from the beginning that the superior military strength and preparation and the greater political force were on the side of Prussia. The war was still going on, and was not indeed very far on its way, when my time had arrived for returning to the United States. I left England in October, 1870, and returned to my old quarters in New York.

During both my visits to America I naturally went very often to Boston. I made the acquaintance there of that group of distinguished men whose writings shed such a lustre over the Massachusetts capital. Emerson was the first man who showed me over all the places of historic interest in Boston, and I was invited to stay with Longfellow and with Lowell at their homes in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and I had repeated opportunities of enjoying the delightful companionship of Oliver Wendell Holmes. I have written so much, however, about those happy Boston days in another book of mine that I must not allow myself to be tempted into any further discourse about the men and the women with whom I was then brought into association, and who must always live in my memory.

During my first and second visits to the States I spent much of my spare time at the home of my

brother Frank. He and his wife and children lived then in a quaint old-fashioned stone-built house in New Jersey, near to the railway station at Bayonne, a few miles from New York city. It was a lonely and out-of-the-way place then, but it has probably become a very crowded region in later days. My brother loved it because it was so much out of the way and so lonely, or comparatively lonely, for a place within easy reach of New York, and because it was near New York Bay, and had some picturesque woods still flourishing around it. He was cultivating, as closely as his other work allowed him, his taste for painting, and there seemed then every reason to believe that he was destined to come to a genuine success in his paintings of American scenery. His wife was and is a gifted and charming woman, with a turn for literary work, and she had then her family of children around her. I have often thought that the days which I passed at their home were among the very happiest days of my life. After so many years of parting from Frank, it was such an exquisite delight for me to be with him again, to see him and his wife and family and my wife and mine all domiciled in the same home — and a very picturesque home it was. Our evenings spent together in his house, and our walks together in the woods and beside the sea, often seemed to me like the realisation of some dreamland happiness. My brother did not live long enough to accom-

plish that success in his art for which we all believed that we had good reason to hope. He had, as I said, to give up most of his time to the ever present and unavoidable work of maintaining his family by his business occupation. I never saw him after the close of my second visit to America, but my sister-in-law and I had many loving meetings later on, although not in the same old home, and we interchange frequent letters up to the present day. The mere thought of her brings back with a rush the memory of those early times near dear old Bayonne.

During my first and second visits to the New World I travelled a good deal through Canada. With my second visit began my regular work as a lecturer. I generally found a subject for my lectures in some event just going on in Europe: the publication, perhaps, of some remarkable new book, the uprising of some important literary or artistic controversy, or the character and genius of some illustrious public man. The work was very fatiguing when the travel was incessant, but it had its distinct advantages. It brought me in some money, and thus enabled me, when the lecturing season was over, to take a complete rest, or to travel when and whither I felt inclined. Then, again, the mere work of lecturing was all the more easy for me because, as I have already said, I never could prepare a discourse; and as I only spoke on subjects with which I was tolerably well acquainted, I had

but to mount the platform and express my opinions as well as I could. The time thus spent was for all its fatigues full of interest and enjoyment to me, because it enabled me to become for the hour something better than a mere stranger and an outside observer in each place which I visited. I had always felt strongly drawn towards the United States and its people, partly because of America's splendid irruption into history, and partly because it had been for so long a time the chosen home of every Irishman suffering from unjust laws and disheartening conditions in his native land, and partly, too, because there was much in American literature of the higher order, in the writings of men like Emerson and Hawthorne, Longfellow and Wendell Holmes, and that man of strange, eccentric genius, Edgar Allan Poe, which had from my very boyhood appealed to my mind and heart. In the south of Ireland we took to these American writers with intense interest, and in the social groups with which I was familiar while still living in Cork city the writings of Emerson, the poems of Longfellow, and the "Raven" of Edgar Poe were as well known as the works of Scott, or Byron, or Moore. Then, again, there was the fact that my brother had settled in America, and that when I crossed the Atlantic he and I were the sole survivors of the family which had had its home in Cork.

I never felt therefore in America anything like

the sense of strangeness which one naturally feels in a foreign country. It did not seem foreign to me. Everywhere I went, I met some Irish men and women whom I had known in the old country, and who did not regard themselves as foreigners in America, but were heart and soul in sympathy with its institutions, its people, and its progress. For a time I even regarded it as an open question whether I should or should not follow the example of my brother and make my home in the United States, and this consideration in itself made me feel a quicker and a deeper interest in every illustration of American life and growth. It appeared to me just then as if a Nationalist Irishman might render better service to his country in the United States than it would be possible for him to do in Ireland. About this time things were looking singularly unhopeful for the Irishman whose heart and mind were devoted to the cause of his country's legislative independence. The rebellion of 1848 and its failure had been followed by a long period of deep depression throughout the island, and by an immense flood of emigration to the United States and Canada. The Irish Nationalist members of the House of Commons, among whom were many able and sincere men like Sir Charles Gavan Duffy and John Francis Maguire, had devoted themselves mainly to a patient endeavour at a reform in the system of Irish land tenure, but the agitation for Home

Rule had not yet taken shape. Then came the abortive rising which sprang from the Fenian movement in 1867, and again for a while a season of inaction and depression set in.

In 1871, however, a distinct Home Rule organisation began to form itself through Ireland, and to send its representatives to the House of Commons. The recognised Parliamentary leader of this movement was Isaac Butt, the brilliant advocate who had taken part in the defence of Smith O'Brien and Meagher at the special commission in Clonmel after the failure of the 1848 movement. Butt had been for a great part of his life a Conservative in politics, but he had gradually come round to see that nothing short of domestic self-government could satisfy the national aspirations of the Irish people, or could secure anything like permanent peace and growing prosperity to the island of his birth. Butt was a man of great political capacity and a brilliant debater, although he did not show himself quite strong enough for the important position he had come to occupy. Still, it was evident that a new chapter of history was about to open for Ireland, and that a political agitation had begun which had set before itself a clearly defined and practicable end. A new ray of hope seemed to me to shine before my country. What I had seen of the Young Ireland rising, what I had read and heard about the Fenian rising, had convinced me that the forces of the

ruling power were far too strong to allow even the faintest chance of success to any attempt at an armed rebellion in Ireland. I believed also that if the whole of my countrymen could unite in maintaining a patient and persistent Parliamentary movement for the restoration to Ireland of her native Parliament, the heart and reason of thoughtful and fair-minded Englishmen might be won over to recognise the justice of the national demand. I then felt assured, as I still feel assured, that if Ireland's national Parliament were restored to her, there would be no reason why she should not remain a contented and prospering partner in the British Imperial system. At the time it seemed to me that Butt was a man well qualified to lead such a movement, and that a new and brighter era was setting in for the Irish national cause.

I began now to think that a period was coming when an Irishman devoted to the maintenance of Ireland's national claims could probably serve his country better in London than in New York. The restoration of Ireland's domestic Parliament would have to be accomplished in the British legislature, and although I had not then any idea of endeavouring to find a seat in the House of Commons, I was coming to the conclusion that I might render better service to the cause as a writer and a speaker in England than I could possibly do in the United States. I received

many kindly and pressing invitations to remain in America and to continue my connection with literature and journalism there, and the invitations had much to recommend them and seemed to promise a satisfactory career. I remember that one warm-hearted American friend offered to present me with a new house and a large piece of ground in the near neighbourhood of New York, as a gift to me and my heirs forever, if I would settle down there and become a naturalised citizen of the United States. My mind, however, soon became made up, and my decision had the full sympathy and approval of those most closely interested in my future. So I gave up the idea of becoming an American citizen, and returned to London in 1871.

CHAPTER XI

BACK TO LONDON

When I settled down again in London, the war between France and Prussia had come to an end, the Empire had fallen, and Louis Napoleon was once more an exile in England. A new Republic had arisen, and its representative chambers were established at Versailles. The outbreak of the Commune insurrection had blazed over Paris and had at last been suppressed after much slaughter, and Thiers was President of the new Republic. I was naturally very anxious to see what Paris looked like after the tempestuous events which had come to pass since my latest visit to the dearly loved French capital. I made arrangements to go and have a look at the old familiar places, and to listen to some of the debates in Versailles. I was all the more impelled to visit Paris by my knowledge of the fact that my dear old friend Louis Blanc had returned to his native land, and had been elected a member of the National Assembly. I felt sure that I should have in him a most valuable guide to a just appreciation of the new state of affairs. I went over to Paris and spent there an intensely interesting time. Everything had

changed in the comparatively short period since I had last looked on the familiar streets of the beautiful city. The Tuileries was a heap of ruins, and so were most of the Courts of Justice. The signs of the wreck and ruin created by the Commune were everywhere visible around Paris, everywhere were the concrete evidences of the recent military operations, and the whole place had just the aspect one might naturally expect to see in a city lately taken by storm. The Hôtel Louvre, where I had been in the habit of staying during my former visits to Paris, was turned for the time into a sort of State hospital, and I had to find out other quarters.

I was delighted to meet my old friend Louis Blanc again, and to find him full of good spirits after all that he had gone through during the siege of Paris and the time of the Commune. He told me that while the siege was going on, the one privation most keenly felt by him was the want of light every evening after the sun had set. He said that he could manage fairly well to put up with the scanty fare and the food, or scraps of food to which he could not venture to give a name, but to be absolutely without light when the later evening set in was rather too much for his endurance. Under the conditions it was quite impossible that the material of candles could be kept for mere illuminating purposes, and to a student of literature and a professional author the night hours were

terrible, as they could not be brightened by the reading of a book or the writing of a chapter. He told me, too, that he had no complaint to make with regard to the preservation of order under the rule of the Commune, and that, on the whole, the streets were better kept and the security of people in the streets better maintained than had been done during the time of the siege. Louis Blanc's wife was a German by birth and spoke French with a marked German accent, but he assured me that under the Commune she was able to go about the city absolutely unmolested, and to transact her household business without ever being subjected to molestation or insult on account of her nationality. I accompanied Louis Blanc to Versailles several times, and he always obtained admission for me to a good place in what I may call the Strangers' gallery of the National Assembly. I heard Thiers speak and Gambetta and many other men of distinction, and it was an event of deepest interest in my life to be present during the debates of an assembly which had for its object the restoration of peace, prosperity, and order in France, and the creation of a new Republic.

The change in the fortunes of the country was somewhat curiously brought home to me one day when Louis Blanc and I happened to be passing the ruins of the Tuileries. We stopped and looked at them for a moment, and then it suddenly came back to my recollection that the very last time I

had ever seen Louis Napoleon was one day when he and the Empress Eugénie were driving in their carriage out of the palace gates and a crowd of passers-by had collected to do them honour. That was before there had come up any expectation of a war between France and Prussia, and even so lately as that time there was still a large proportion of the French people who firmly believed that Louis Napoleon was founding a strong and a stable Empire. It seemed to me but the other day that I had thus seen the Emperor and the Empress, and now the Empire had gone down and Louis Napoleon and Eugénie were exiles in London. During my stay in Paris I spent many pleasant hours in the home of Mr. Crawford, then the Paris correspondent of the "Daily News," and his wife, Emily Crawford. Mrs. Crawford was bright and charming in conversation, was a keen observer, full of ideas, and had thoroughly studied the social and political life of Paris. After her husband's death she succeeded him as correspondent of the "Daily News," and I never afterwards visited the French capital without going to see her and enjoying her genial hospitality. My stay in Paris at this time was not very long. I returned to my occupations in London with my thoughts still much occupied by the fallen Empire and the rising Republic.

I worked on the "Daily News" as a writer of leaders and occasional literary articles very regu-

larly. I used to go down to the offices of the "Daily News" in Bouverie Street and Fleet Street for five nights in each week, Sunday night being generally one of them, and I wrote on some topic or other which had just come up to interest the public. At the same time I kept assiduously to my work as a novelist and a writer of stories. I greatly enjoyed my work, and some of my novels were so favourably noticed by the press and so well received by the public that I began to ask myself now and then, and to be asked by others, whether it would not be better for me to give up the daily work of journalism altogether and devote myself to the writing of books. Life would most certainly be easier and much more under my own control if I were able to make a living by settling down to my own desk in my own study, and were freed from the nightly attendance at a newspaper office and the mental distraction of having to write leading articles on the spur of the moment, on all manner of subjects. But if I had any occasional yearnings for the quiet and self-directed life of a literary man, I did not allow them to sway me, and I held on steadfastly to my newspaper work.

My readers will probably have seen long before this that I had a very decided taste for politics and political subjects. I liked to feel that I was engaged, to some extent at least, in the thrilling movements of political life. It was often part of my duty, indeed during each session of Parlia-

ment the main part of my duty, to write articles on the debates in the House of Commons, and I had always a seat provided for me in the Press gallery of the House, where I could listen to the debate and write my comments on it as it went on. There was a great charm to me about this study of the House of Commons. The arrangements of the Press gallery, though not nearly so good as they have been made in later times, were very well suited to the work of a leader-writer. There were convenient writing-rooms, and one could dine on the premises, if I may use that somewhat familiar expression when speaking of so august an institution as Westminster Palace. There were cultured and brilliant writers of leading articles for my companions in the Press gallery, and among the reporters who had front seats in the same gallery during their "turns" of note-taking, there were young men who have since won high literary distinction. Even while the debate was actually going on, there were sure to be many speakers on whose words the public could not be supposed to hang with passionate interest, and the writer of leading articles could feel quite free while these orators were in possession of the House to pay a visit to the smoking-room, and relieve his mind for the while from the pains of literary composition.

There was one difficulty in the way of the leader-writer during the early seventies, which has

been to a great extent removed by the better mechanical facilities given in more recent times to the production of the morning newspaper. When I was writing in the Press gallery for the "Daily News," the paper had to go to press at a very early hour in the morning, and, as a matter of necessity, the leader-writer's article had to be finished and despatched to the office of the journal long before there was any chance of the sitting coming to a close. After his article, completed so far as he could complete it, had reached the editorial office, there might still be some little time during which the editor could add a few lines in further explanation of the course which the debate was taking. But it happened not infrequently that the debate went on, and that the division was taken long after the time when any addition or alteration could be made in the leading article. Therefore the leader-writer in the Press gallery had always to bear in mind that he must not construct his article on the basis of a too confident expectation as to what might happen before the close of the sitting. He must do his best to see that the coming events which might not have quite cast their shadow before were not found to be in absolute contradiction with a forecast indulged in too confidently by the writer. The inevitable result of this condition of things was that the article had often to be a kind of rhetorical essay in the air — an essay on the whole

general subject, not committing the paper to any final opinion on the effect of the evening's debate. To one behind the scenes, who thoroughly understood the working of the system, there was occasionally something grotesque and even comic about the final form which the article took in the morning's issue of the journal. Let me assume, in order to make my meaning clear, a case not merely possible, but which in many instances actually occurred. The subject of debate, we will suppose, was a resolution brought forward by some leading orator of the Opposition, condemning the Government for a course he believed it meant to take with regard to a great crisis in foreign affairs. The debate was thought likely to last for two or three sittings, and the leader-writer had this belief fully in his mind when he began to write his article. If he were an experienced hand, he took care not to rely too much on this belief, and tried to secure himself against possibilities by making his article a sort of general attack on the Government and its policy — I am now assuming that his journal was on the side of the Opposition — and giving the fullest support to the resolution and the speaker who championed it. He kept on with his work until the time came when the "copy" had to be sent to the newspaper, and then he had nothing more to do but to listen to the debate, without any hope of being able to add to his commentary. But then comes in that terrible

and unmanageable "unexpected." The leader of the Government rises at a late hour and delivers a speech declaring that his colleagues and he had no intention whatever of acting upon any such policy as that ascribed to them by the right honourable gentleman who had proposed the resolution. He explains with a certain jocose humour that he had not intervened at an earlier period of the debate because he wished to give the right honourable and honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House a full opportunity of expressing the views which they evidently believed to be of great importance to the public interest. Then having made it clear that the course taken by the Opposition was a complete mistake, he puts it to the House whether there would be any advantage in the prolongation of the debate. The result is that the resolution of censure has to be withdrawn, and the whole debate comes practically to nothing. This settlement of the question becomes known to the editor of our imaginary journal just in time for him to prefix a few lines to the article, describing the fate of the resolution. It is too late for any alteration of the article itself, and too late, under the mechanical arrangements of the paper, for its complete withdrawal. Therefore the article comes out the next morning with its few opening lines announcing the fate of the resolution, and its whole substance a vigorous essay maintaining the purport of the resolution

and denouncing the Government for a policy it never intended to pursue. I have often wondered what the ordinary reader, who knew nothing of the mechanical arrangements and restrictions under which the editor had to work, must have thought of an article opening with a definite and final announcement and then going on through its whole length as if no such announcement had ever been made.

I have taken a peculiar instance, but I can assure my readers that I have known many instances in which something equally inconsistent has shown itself in the leading columns of a morning newspaper. Of late years there has been so great an improvement in all the working arrangements — I mean the mechanical arrangements — of journalism and in the efficiency of the telegraphic system that during my later time of leader-writing we were seldom driven to such embarrassing and unsatisfactory compromises. But for some time after my earliest connection with the "Daily News" such things were still possible, and could only be avoided with certainty by attempting no leading article on any great question in the House of Commons which was not sure to last over that particular sitting, or else only to write over the head and round about the subject of debate without committing the paper to any definite expression of opinion as to the result of the coming division.

I had now settled down in London, and came

into close association with some artistic, literary, and political circles. At that time the artistic school known as that of the pre-Raphaelites was spreading widely its influence, and there were many rising poets of this new school which recognised Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and William Morris as its leaders and its lights. There was a brilliant circle existing then in London, whose social life I have described in another book of mine as the Bohemia of Fitzroy Square. I gave it that name because its central point might be said to be the house and studio of Ford Madox Brown, the founder of the pre-Raphaelite school of painters, and afterwards closely connected with the Rossetti family. Madox Brown was a painter of really original genius, of splendid executive power, and of the highest culture in his art. The squares and streets in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square were then much occupied by literary men, by painters, and by rising politicians. I hear that this region, which for a while fell into a sort of obscurity when some of its leading intellectual lights had gone out, is once again becoming a centre of literature and art. In the days of Ford Madox Brown this was its especial characteristic. Madox Brown himself was not only a great painter, but a deep thinker on most subjects, and, unlike many artists, he took an intense interest in political reforms of every kind, in all movements, Parliamentary or other, which tended to the advancement

of education and of progress towards political freedom and the abolition of disqualifying restrictions. I found myself deeply interested in the society around me, and I never look back upon those times without feeling that I was especially fortunate in my association with such a set of workers. We used to have frequent gatherings in each other's houses for the purpose of discussing every new development in art and letters and political life, and the interest created by our genial meetings began to bring leaders of public opinion from the circles of the West End to share in our conversations.

We were near to the British Museum and to the London University College buildings, and the student might well have found himself at home and happy in such a region. My son was a pupil in the school and college attached to the London University, and my daughter studied art in the Slade School for some years. I do not believe that her education has suffered in any sense from the fact that she never attended any school of general instruction. It was in itself a liberal education for her to have been brought up in constant association with that which I have called the Bohemia of Fitzroy Square. I may mention in describing this part of my life that we indulged ourselves every year in a holiday of foreign travel. We spent our holidays in France, Holland, and Belgium, and in Italy, making ourselves especially well

acquainted with Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, and the Italian lakes. It seemed to me at the time, and seems to me still, that this was about as good a system of education as my son and daughter could have obtained.

Meanwhile I kept on working at the production of novels, and some of these were successful enough to justify me in keeping to that line of productiveness. But I also began to take closer and deeper interest in politics, and I got into the way of speaking at political meetings and taking part in associations having for their object the promotion of the Irish national cause. I had never for a moment lost my sympathy with that cause, or thrown away any opportunity of helping towards its advancement. One of my near neighbours at that time was a young man whose name afterwards became famous throughout the civilised world, the late Charles Stewart Parnell. I first came to know him because we were both members of an association of London Irishmen banded together for the spread of the Irish national cause. My home was then in Gower Street, and Parnell lived in one of the streets leading out of it. He used to come to my house very often, and we had long talks over political affairs. One of Parnell's sisters was greatly devoted to painting, and Parnell, though not much of an artist in the ordinary sense, took a kindly interest in my daughter's early studies at the Slade School. He was a very young man then,

and indeed his whole life did not last beyond middle age. He was very tall, very handsome, with finely moulded, delicate features. His eyes were especially remarkable. I have not seen others like them. Their light was peculiar, penetrating, and (to use aptly a somewhat hackneyed term) magnetic. His manners in private life were singularly sweet and winning, and in the company of his friends he was both humorous and witty. His influence over me and his advice began to give more and more a distinctly political turn to my career. He had already begun to make himself a most conspicuous figure in the House of Commons, but as yet there were very few who could foresee the high and unique position which he was destined to hold as a political leader.

I had for a long time been contemplating an attempt at historical work, and my first idea was to write a history of the English Radical party. My intentions were well known to my friend Sir John Robinson, the manager of the "Daily News," and through him came the chance which first led to my undertaking a political work of a considerably wider order. A great and popular publishing firm in London was contemplating the production of a history of Queen Victoria's reign, and a leading member of the firm happened to have some conversation on the subject with Sir John Robinson, who suggested my name as that of a likely man to undertake such a work. The immediate

result of this suggestion was that I received an offer from the publishing firm on what appeared to me fair and even liberal terms, which I promptly accepted, and an engagement was entered into that I should write the history. I went to work at once, and gave all my spare time to the earlier chapters of the book. This was a task entirely congenial with my literary inclinations. The reign of Queen Victoria had begun when I was yet but a little child, and had thus "folded in the orb of my existence." I had always been from my very boyhood deeply interested in passing events, and I therefore thought that in attempting the history of the Victorian reign I was not dealing with an altogether unfamiliar subject. I could appreciate, to begin with, the proportions of all the great events occurring during that time, — which was in fact my own lifetime, — and I felt that I was not entering into an unknown field when I took upon myself to tell the story of the reign.

I was working steadily on my opening chapters when my historical labours were suddenly interrupted. Some paragraphs had just then appeared in several London newspapers announcing the fact that I had been requested by an Irish constituency to become its representative in the House of Commons, as a member of the Irish National party. The publishers who had entered into the engagement with me became alarmed at the idea of presenting to the reading world a history of the

reign having for its author a member of the Home Rule party in Parliament. At that time, as indeed at many times before and since, the average British reader was not likely to regard with much favour anything done or attempted by one who avowed his association with such a political group. I believe also that the paragraphs in the newspapers gave it to be understood that if elected to Parliament I might be expected to take my place among the most advanced of the Irish Nationalists — among those who were beginning to acknowledge the influence of Parnell. Under these conditions the publishers regarded the book as one foredoomed to failure in England, and they wrote to me expressing their views, and offering me a certain pecuniary compensation for the giving up of the engagement on my part to write and on their part to publish the history. I need not go further into the details of the arrangements which followed — arrangements which were submitted to the judgment of a small committee of arbitration representing each side of the dispute, and presided over by Sir John Robinson. I was quite resolved that under the circumstances my work must not be pressed upon the publishers, and so we came to a sort of friendly settlement as to the increase of the terms of compensation.

I had, before this time, had some dealings with the firm of Chatto & Windus, and when the negotiations with the other publishers had come to an

end, I showed the chapters I had written to Mr. Andrew Chatto, who looked over them, and after one short interview decided to publish the history. I worked hard at the first and second volumes, and these made their appearance without undue delay, under the title of "A History of Our Own Times." The opening volumes met with a success which I may say, without any affectation of modesty, was totally unexpected by me — a success, too, which proved that the British public would not positively refuse to read a book, even a book on living history, because it was written by an Irishman who had avowed himself a supporter of the Irish national cause. I may say in passing that my career as journalist, novelist, and historian, depending for success upon the English public, might well have been regarded as hampered from the beginning by the fact that I was an Irishman, a Roman Catholic, and an advocate of the cause of Home Rule. But I never found these facts interfere in the slightest degree with the fair reception of my books by English critics or English readers. Of course there were times soon to come when the policy pursued by the Irish National party in the House of Commons aroused the wildest storms of indignation against us throughout England, and I do not say that if my first and second volumes had been published during one of these periods its success might not have been delayed in England by the temper of the times. But everybody

must make allowance for such periods of political animosity, and we cannot expect that all readers should have minds quite free from the prejudices of the hour. What I desire to comment on with some emphasis is that I have not had to contend during my career with any unfair treatment on the part of publishers or public because of my nationality, my religion, or my political opinions. I may say, in passing from this subject, that the publication of the first and second volumes of "A History of Our Own Times" made a distinct epoch in my literary career, and that my close friendship with the publishing firm of Chatto & Windus, which began with the publication of that history, is likely to last during the remainder of my life.

The newspapers which announced that I had been invited to stand as a candidate for the representation of an Irish constituency were correct in their announcement. I began to feel little doubt that whenever a vacancy occurred in one or other of certain Irish constituencies, I should be invited to offer myself as a candidate for the vacant seat. Up to this time I had not committed myself to any definite support of either of the two sections into which the Irish Parliamentary party was then divided. Let it be understood that there was no difference of principle in that party so far as Home Rule and the great Land question were concerned. On these and most other of the questions affect-

ing the national interests of Ireland, the whole party was of one mind. But there was a great and growing division of opinion as to the best method of conducting the campaign in Parliament for the settlement of these questions. No actual and formal disruption of the party had yet taken place, and Isaac Butt was still accepted on both sides as the leader of the Irish Nationalist members. The differences already making themselves apparent, which ended in something like a revolt in the party, were entirely concerned with the method in which the struggle ought to be conducted in the House of Commons. Isaac Butt, the nominal leader, was a politician of the old school, filled with a spirit of deference for all the systems and the forms of the House of Commons, and anxious that the party should show itself thoroughly amenable to the authorities and the usages of the House. On the other hand, Parnell had already made his mark by endeavouring to introduce an entirely different system of policy and of tactics. Parnell's firm belief was that the one only course for the Irish Parliamentary party was to compel the attention of the whole country to the national claims of Ireland. His desire was to make it clear to the House of Commons and to the country that if the House would not give its due consideration to the claims urged by the Irish members, then the Irish members would allow no other work to be done.

Parnell's policy was, in fact, that system of obstruction which afterwards created so great a commotion all through the country, and became talked of throughout the whole civilised world. The rules of the House of Commons then gave almost infinite opportunities for the working of the policy of obstruction. That policy was no invention of Parnell's, and had indeed been a recognised method of Parliamentary warfare ever since the constitutional system in its more modern form came to be established in England. But in the days before Parnell had come to the front, the policy of obstruction was only put into practice at rare intervals and when some exceptional occasion arose which one or other political party might regard as a justification for resisting, by every constitutional means, the action of the Government. Our history is full of instances in which illustrious leaders of the Opposition had felt themselves warranted in opposing the passage of some particular measure by means of unmitigated although strictly constitutional obstruction. But the novelty in the Irish case was that Parnell for the first time adopted the idea of resisting systematically every measure brought in by the Administration unless or until the whole claims of Ireland should obtain a fair hearing. Parnell proposed to use on behalf of all the claims of Ireland the policy which English leaders had only applied on rare occasions to exceptional measures.

Parnell, it should be borne in mind, was always and above all things a constitutional and parliamentary politician. He had measured the whole situation with calm and keen scrutiny; he thoroughly recognised the immense power which England could bring to bear for crushing a rebellious movement, and he therefore never gave the slightest encouragement to any policy which could bring about such a result. But he felt convinced that, even while keeping strictly within the lines of the Constitution, the Irish members could so completely delay and disarrange the whole business of the House of Commons as to make it worth the while of any Ministry to come to terms with them on the subject of the national claims. Furthermore, Parnell had a strong conviction that if, by such a policy, the attention of the whole English people could be aroused or even startled into a knowledge of the fact that Ireland had some claims to press which she would not abandon, the effect would be in the end to obtain a hearing for the Irish cause from all reasonable Englishmen, and thus to secure before long a recognition of the justice of Ireland's demands. The idea that Parnell ever sought to carry out his policy for the mere purpose of tormenting and distracting the hostile majority in the House of Commons, an idea commonly entertained in England at one time, was utterly absurd. Parnell believed that he had found the only practicable and

available method, under all the conditions, of securing a full consideration for the Irish cause, and to secure a full consideration for it was, in his belief, to secure its ultimate peaceful triumph. He was first elected to the House of Commons in April, 1875, and he very soon began his policy of obstruction. His policy was entirely in antagonism to that of Isaac Butt and the elder members of the Irish National party. But many of the younger men took to it cordially, and Parnell soon began to find that he had to support him an increasing number of followers. It gradually became evident that the party would have to choose once for all between the policy of Butt and the policy of Parnell.

In the early days of 1879, a vacancy occurred in the representation of Longford County in Ireland because of the death of one of its two members. I received quite unexpectedly from some leading Nationalists in the county an invitation to stand as a candidate for the vacant seat. I made up my mind at once to accept the invitation, and started that same evening, with my son, in the train for Holyhead on my way to Longford.

CHAPTER XII

MEMBER FOR LONGFORD

My electioneering campaign in Longford does not afford me much opportunity for any description of the characteristic humours supposed to belong to a Parliamentary contest in an Irish constituency. There was not from beginning to end the slightest chance of serious and practical opposition to the popular candidate. The Conservative or Tory party in the county was represented only by the resident landlords and their dependents, while an overwhelming majority of the voters were thoroughly Nationalistic in political principles. There was, to be sure, a certain difference of opinion among these voters as to the length they were prepared to go in supporting the old Nationalist policy or the new; in other words, in supporting Butt or Parnell. But it might safely be taken for granted that no difference of opinion among the majority of the voters on this question could possibly be regarded as holding out any promise of success to a Tory candidate. I believe I had been invited to stand by some of the leaders of the local Nationalist party on the ground that I was not likely to go into extremes on the one side

or the other. They felt that I would neither refuse to Isaac Butt an opportunity of mending his ways and adopting a stronger policy, nor deny any recognition of the rising claims of Parnell. Among the Longford constituents these Parnellite claims were certainly growing in strength, and it was probably well known that I was a personal friend of Parnell, although not yet actually pledged to his Parliamentary policy. I had therefore a very easy and pleasant time of it in this my first appearance as a candidate for election to the House of Commons.

One of the leading Nationalists of the county, from whom, indeed, and through whose influence I had received my invitation to become a candidate, was Mr. Harry McCann, whose close friendship I obtained — a friendship which lasted until his death not many years ago. Harry McCann was a very remarkable and interesting figure in the local life of his county. He was by occupation what used to be called a gentleman-farmer, and he carried on a large business with the products of his farm. He had a fine figure, an expressive face, an immense shaggy beard, and energetic movements. He looked as if he might have stepped on to Longford soil from one of Bret Harte's mining camps. He was a splendid horseman and devoted to hunting and steeple-chasing. But he had a great deal more in him than an ordinary observer would have assumed after a casual meet-

ing. McCann was really a man of remarkable natural ability; he had had a very good education to begin with, and he had read and studied much for himself. He had travelled on the European Continent and in the United States and Canada, and he always carried away with him vivid impressions of everything he had seen. He was a thinking man in his way, and his ideas, whether right or wrong, were all his own. He was always anxious to learn something new, and if anybody with whom he came into conversation could tell anything worth knowing, Harry McCann was sure to get it out of him. Few men whom I ever met have seemed to me more interesting in conversation than my dear old friend Harry McCann, and I have always thought that if he had been a man of independent means, or had possessed any personal ambition, he might have played a conspicuous and honourable part in public life. But he had a wife and children to support, and he was strongly and almost sentimentally attached to that part of Ireland familiar to him from his boyhood. No persuasion could induce him to accept a seat in the House of Commons as one of the representatives of his county, because it would have taken him away so much from his beloved home. It was, I am sure, because he was a close reader of books, new as well as old, that he had come to take an interest in my writings, and had been led to believe that I might be a suitable representative of Longford. All

the time he had to spare from his business concerns and from hunting appointments he devoted to local affairs, and at the time when I first knew him he was chairman of the Longford Board of Guardians. He was a most hospitable man, was fond of entertaining his friends, and gave them excellent wines. He was generous to all who had need of his help, and the poor of Longford found in him a sympathetic and benevolent friend. He had come to hold great influence in his part of the county, for every one knew that he had a clear head and a sound judgment, and that he sought no personal or selfish advantages in any of his public acts. He was a most delightful host, imbued with all the spirit of a high-class and much-travelled country gentleman of an order which I think is not quite common in secluded parts of the country, whether England or Ireland, in our present time. Harry McCann would have kept the dullest company alive by his genuine gift of humour, his quickness of repartee, his skill as a story-teller, and the variety of illustration which he was able to give to every subject from his own mind, his reading, and his experiences. He also possessed that rare and happy quality of sympathy which enabled him to see the best that was in every man, and thus to bring it forth in conversation. I enjoyed many dinner parties at his house; and he did not confine his invitations merely to men of his own political views, but had

made for himself close friends among Conservative landlords as well as among Irish Nationalists. One entertainment given at his house I have ever since borne in mind, and it always seems to me as if it had come into life from the pages of one of Scott's novels. First, we had a dinner at which only men were present, and the viands and the wines would have done credit to a lordly "pleasure-house," while the talk that went round the table was as sparkling as the finest champagne could desire to have for its accompaniment. Then there came an evening party, at which of course a crowd of ladies was present, and later still there was a dance which we kept up until the stars had faded from the sky and the flush of dawn came to tell of the inquisitive day. Nothing could in its way have been, as I thought, more picturesque than the scene which I looked upon outside the hall-door of the house as the guests were taking their departure. The ladies went off in carriages, many of the male guests mounted their horses; the whole drive was covered with the departing guests on horse, in carriage, or on foot; there was loud interchange of friendly farewells and cheery congratulations on the success of the evening's entertainment; some of the mounted guests carolled snatches of songs, the ladies in the carriages waved their handkerchiefs to the host and hostess at the doorway, and then the dispersing crowd began to stream its different

ways along the road and over the range of low-lying hills. It must have been something in this movement of horses and carriages and this waving of farewells under the skies of the rising morn that gave in my fancy an entirely old-time aspect to the scene, and set me thinking of Walter Scott when I might perhaps have been reminded of Charles Lever.

One of Harry McCann's close friends, however, whom I often met in his house, did certainly remind me of some types of Irish character to be found in Lever's novels. This was a local lawyer, an attorney as the phrase then put it, Mr. Christopher Reynolds, or Kit Reynolds as he was almost invariably described by those who knew him, and even by many who did not know him but had only heard of him. Kit Reynolds had a very considerable practice in the law courts of Longford and of Dublin; but unless you happened to be a client of his or engaged in some lawsuit wherein he represented the other side, you might have met him incessantly without discovering that he had anything to do with the instructing of counsel or the preparation of briefs. His whole sense and soul appeared to be given up to sport of some kind or other. He was devoted to hunting and to horse-racing, and he seemed never to talk voluntarily on any other subject. He was full of a rich jovial humour, and used to rattle off good things as easily as another man could give out commonplaces. He

was a good shot, had an intense interest in all open-air sports, and was at the same time a capital hand with a pack of cards. No one could help liking him, and I do not remember having ever heard any censorious criticism passed upon him. The whole figure was an absolute novelty to me. I had known in my native city many barristers and attorneys who loved hunting and racing and were good hands at field sports of all kinds, but with them the hunting and the racing and the other field sports seemed only to be the holiday pastimes which relieved the close and heavy work of their professional business. Kit Reynolds, on the other hand, seemed to the ordinary observer as if he had been created for nothing but riding and sport. I suppose he must have attended to his professional work somehow or other, and indeed I had myself some dealings with him in his professional capacity, but except for this accidental fact and for what his friends told me about him, I might never have known that Kit Reynolds was under the necessity of making a living by his work as a lawyer.

The last time of my meeting with Harry McCann saw an event which may be described as a sort of milestone, metaphorically that is to say, in the story of my life. There had been during the day a distribution of prizes for athletic sports, and in the evening we had a dinner at Harry McCann's and a final dance. That was for me a final dance in the most literal sense. I accomplished, not

altogether too awkwardly let me hope, a waltz or a polka with a Longford lady, and that was the last time I ever took any part but that of a spectator in the festivities of the ball-room. Thereupon I accepted my place as one of the order of elderly gentlemen who are supposed to look down with a sort of benevolent pity on the vain and frivolous amusements of the dance.

I was most agreeably surprised and impressed when I found on my first visit to Longford that I had to deal with so instructive a guide and so companionable and interesting a host. Under his conduct I attended several meetings, private as well as public, brought together to consider and pronounce upon my qualifications as a Nationalist representative. I had very little real difficulty to contend with; and even if there had been much more trouble to encounter, it would have been made to seem light under the genial influence of Harry McCann's amusing stories and unfailing encouragement. We had alarming reports every now and then about some new candidate who was to be started at any risk by the Conservative landlords; and although it was quite certain that no such candidate would have the least chance of obtaining the seat, yet the trouble, the excitement, the disturbance and commotion, as well as the expense of a contested election, seemed to us only all the more undesirable because absolutely futile and merely vexatious. Nothing came

of these rumours, however, and when the day fixed for the nomination arrived, no other candidate offered himself to the constituency. Then followed what was to me at the time the most nervously exciting part of the whole business. After the nomination the presiding officer had to allow an hour for the possible appearance of a second candidate. This short interval we passed in the office of the local magistrates. Harry McCann and two or three other friends were with me, the authorities were properly represented, and it might have seemed not disagreeable to spend an hour in social conversation while the minutes were speeding on towards the completion of the fateful hour. But my trouble was that the minutes did not seem to me to be speeding on by any means, but rather to be crawling along with unutterable tediousness. It was always one of my weaknesses to become very nervous when a fixed time had to be spent in mere waiting and doing nothing. My weakness in this way was soon discovered by my friend Harry McCann. After what had seemed to me an intolerable stretch of time, — a lapse in fact of some fifteen minutes, — I rose from my seat unthinkingly and began to walk up and down the room. Then McCann declared to me with a bright smile that he had never until that moment suspected me of being a nervous man; but when he saw me get up and begin to pace the room, he felt perfectly assured that he had plucked out the heart of my

mystery. The poet Cowper it is, I think, who tells us to "beware of desperate steps," for the good reason that "the longest day, live till to-morrow, will have passed away." I might from my own experience modify the advice for the benefit of future Parliamentary candidates placed under conditions like to mine, and recommend them not to begin walking impatiently up and down the room, but to remember that the longest hour will pass away within sixty minutes. This was certainly what happened in my own case, and the presiding officer presently announced that the appointed time had passed, that no second candidate had been proposed, and that I was therefore elected as one of the members for the county of Longford.

I was much interested in my observation of the life, the movements, and the ways of Longford during my earlier visits to my constituents. Indeed, I was deeply interested in them also during my later visits, but at first they had the charm for me of novelty and of old recollections as well. I had been for more than quarter of a century a resident in England before I was invited to stand for Longford, and therefore I found this charm of novelty in being once again an Irishman on his own soil and among his own people. But of course all my old memories of Ireland came to lend the other charm of recollection and association to everything I saw around me when I visited my Longford constituency. Longford is a central part of Ireland,

far away from the sea and from the great seaport cities, is, or was then, very seldom visited by strangers, and had kept up all its old ways, undiluted by the ways of London or Liverpool or Manchester. It seemed to me that I had gone back to the days of my youth, and was seeing Ireland as I had known her in the far-off time before I ever set foot on English soil. There was hardly anything to be noticed among those whom I met in Longford which suggested an ambition to imitate English manners and fashions, or to be thought genteel and polite according to what was assumed to be the English mode — an ambition which has a somewhat unattractive and ungraceful effect on certain classes in other parts of Ireland, who fancy that they are improving their social condition by striving to become less Irish and more English. I could easily think of some Irish communities where a man who had such influence and such a position as my friend Harry McCann had in Longford might have made it part of his ambition to assimilate himself as far as possible to the social usages and manners of Belgravia.

The mention of that fashionable region of London recalls to my mind an amusing experience of my own during my first canvassing expeditions among the Longford electors. I was brought one day by some of my friends to call upon a shopkeeper of Ballymahon, — Goldsmith's village, — who, although in but a small way of trade, had some

influence among his people and was looked up to as a judicious guide in political affairs. He received me very kindly, told me he had heard very good opinions as to my qualifications for the representation of the place, and was quite prepared to support me in my candidature. But he said that he had great fears about Irishmen who enter the House of Commons being led away from their National principles by the temptations of high life in London, and he therefore urged me with friendly impressiveness never to allow myself to be misled by the aristocratic society of Belgravia and Soho. My poor friend's knowledge of London social life was evidently not drawn from any close study even of English newspapers, and the most feeble-minded Nationalist candidate might have pledged himself in full sincerity then and there never to become a victim to the aristocratic society of Soho! I did not, however, take refuge in this mean evasion, but accepting my friend's advice in the spirit in which it was offered, I gave him my earnest assurance that neither Belgravia nor Soho should win me away from my adhesion to the National cause. I think I may fairly say for myself that not all the promises made by Parliamentary candidates before an election have been kept so faithfully as this pledge of mine, and I have remained ever since as resolute a Nationalist, even though I have actually lived on the confines of Belgravia and occasionally made excursions into Soho.

At one period of my candidature, a rumour had gone abroad through the town that the son of a local Conservative landlord was about to offer himself as a rival claimant for the votes of the constituency. It so happened that this rumour seemed to have acquired especial force on a day when a great fair and market was held in the town, and I was informed that evening that in the middle of the market square, a resident of the place, who had come to the fair to sell a pig, had, in some wild outburst of anti-patriotic sentiment, called upon those around him to join in three cheers for the Conservative candidate. What happened then? Let me tell it in the words of the honest man who told me the whole story. "Then, sir," said he, "the first person who knocked him down was his own wife!" This, my narrator evidently seemed to think, was one of the noblest and at the same time one of the most effective proofs of patriotic virtue that could have been given even by an Irish woman.

I feel bound to say that during my time in Longford there was nothing like serious disturbance even for a moment, that I never saw any evidences of excessive drinking, and that political differences never seemed to obliterate general good-will and private friendship among my constituents. I have in my mind the most agreeable recollections of my visits to Longford, and of the friendships which I made there, the

only melancholy tone about them echoing from the fact that some of those whom I best knew and most liked in Longford have already passed out of life. There were many men in Longford, shopkeepers and others, who would be ranked socially as of the lower middle class, who had intelligence and education enough to do credit to any order — men who had read books as well as newspapers, who could talk even on literary and artistic subjects with a freshness and keenness of appreciation which would have done no discredit even to Belgravia, if we say nothing of Soho. My introduction to Parliamentary life was accomplished for me by the people of Longford in a manner which left no memory behind it but that of grateful acknowledgment and unalloyed kindness.

CHAPTER XIII

MY WORK IN THE HOUSE

The day when one first enters the House of Commons as a member marks assuredly an eventful epoch in his life. I had been familiar for many years with the representative chamber as an observer from the Press gallery or one of the public galleries, but I felt none the less a sensation of nervous strangeness when I crossed the bar for the first time, was introduced by two brother members, signed my name in the book on the table, shook hands with Mr. Speaker, and then found a seat on one of the benches usually occupied by the Irish National Party. The only other event of anything like equal importance in the career of a new member is the making of his first speech. I had not been long in the House before the opportunity was afforded me, and pressed upon me, of venturing on my first attempt at Parliamentary speech-making. The subject under discussion was a motion made by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, an English Liberal member, calling for some reform in the oppressive system of land tenure which then prevailed in Ireland. I may say at once that my occupations in life had not put me much in the way

of getting a practical and minute knowledge of the Irish land tenure system. I had contemplated its general outlines with interest, had read much that John Stuart Mill and other English authorities had written on the subject, and much that had been written by leading Irishmen, and I therefore knew enough to construct a speech about it; but I certainly did not imagine that I could add anything either practical or original to the arguments of the debate. Indeed, I should not have ventured to speak on so important a question just then, but that many of my colleagues in the Irish Party thought it would be a suitable occasion for a new Irish representative to make his first claim on the attention of the House. I need hardly say that I felt miserably and abjectly nervous while waiting for my opportunity to rise and endeavour to catch the Speaker's eye. I had of course no doubt as to the likelihood of my being able to attract that authoritative orb, because it is one of the courteous usages of the House that a member rising to speak for the first time never finds his claim disputed, and is always called upon by Mr. Speaker. But although thus sure of a hearing, I was nervous none the less, and my nervousness increased rather than diminished when I had obtained my hearing and found myself engaged for the first time in addressing the House of Commons. I was received very courteously by the House, was listened to with benignant patience, and I had enough of my wits still

under my control to enable me not to protract my speech to any unreasonable length. It is not too much to say that I positively did not know what I was saying, and derived my main courage from my knowledge that I could somehow manage to make an extemporaneous speech of moderate length without committing myself to any utter absurdity. Many of my friends and some kindly critics in the newspapers said that I had not shown any outward signs or symptoms of nervousness; but I knew then, and I know now, that my nerves were inflicting punishment on me all the time. I do not hesitate to declare that when the speech was finished, and I resumed my seat, I had no feeling whatever but a sense of the utmost relief that the ordeal was over at last. I could not spare any thought to the mental question whether the speech had been a qualified success or an utter failure. All such considerations might come at a later period of the sitting or the next day perhaps, but for the time I could only congratulate myself on the fact that the speech was over and done with, and that I should not have to address the House of Commons again that night.

The House of Commons is a very considerate and indulgent audience to any new member who does not show an inordinate amount of self-conceit, and does not convey in his manner the idea that he believes himself endowed with a special mission to teach the members something they never knew

before, and to dazzle them with an eloquence to which the assembly has been hitherto a stranger. I can answer for it that my speech did not suggest that I was possessed with any such ideas, and so I take it for granted that my first effort at Parliamentary argument passed off on the whole as well as might be expected. One great ambition of my life had now been accomplished — I was actually a member of the House of Commons. I felt already a sense of ownership as I passed through the lobbies and dining-rooms and libraries of the House, and I began to wonder within myself how I had ever contrived to live so long without seeking for such a position before. I always loved the life of the House of Commons. I went through years and years of the most exacting and the most exhausting Parliamentary struggles; I took a part in all the obstructive movements which spread through so many sessions; I had often for session after session to turn night into day and day into night, to go home after the sun had risen over that Westminster scene which Wordsworth has depicted; I can remember having had to spend once three days in the House without ever leaving its precincts; and yet I can honestly say that I found enjoyment in the life of the House of Commons. Moreover, while I was thus striving to discharge my Parliamentary duties, I had all the time to work for a living by the writing of books and newspaper articles.

Even to a man of private fortune, the work of the House is often weary and exhausting, if that member be really resolved to pay a proper attention to his Parliamentary duties. But when, in addition to minding the business of the House, he has also to mind his own business in order to maintain his family and himself, then it will easily be understood that he must sometimes feel disposed to grumble at a rapid succession of divisions coming in to interrupt his literary occupation. A division in the House of Commons takes up about twenty minutes, and if a large number of these should be brought about in the course of one sitting, it will easily be seen that the hapless member who has to make a living by his pen becomes in no merely metaphorical sense a victim to his Parliamentary duty. Let us remember, also, that the loss of time caused by the mechanical tramping through the division lobbies is not the only trouble or even the chief trouble of which our literary M. P. has to complain. Suppose, for instance, that he is a writer of novels — I have heard of such persons having seats in the House — and that he has taken the opportunity of what seems likely to be an uneventful debate to go into the library or into one of the lobbies upstairs and get on with the work he has at heart. I need hardly say that there is no part of the House in which he can hope for absolute seclusion. The rooms in the library, when a thrilling debate is not going on,

are usually well filled with members turning over the pages of books or writing letters. The lobbies upstairs are much used by members for the work of casual correspondence. No sane man could hope for quiet and complete isolation in one of the smoking-rooms. Let us suppose, then, that our novel-writing member betakes himself to one of the lobbies upstairs and sets to work on one of his chapters. He is deeply engrossed in the endeavour half to conceal and half to disclose the love secret of his heroine — a secret which is not to be kept wholly outside any guess on the part of the reader, and yet is to be withheld tantalizingly from full revelation until the right moment comes. A happy idea has arisen, but only faintly, in the mind of our author, like a gleam of light through a cloudy sky, which he hopes will soon resolve itself into the radiance of a guiding star. Suddenly the penetrating thrill of the division bell is heard all over the House, and the voices of the officials shouting "Division!" "Division!" carry their superfluous intimation to the ears of our novel-writing member. He jumps from his seat, leaving his manuscript behind him; hurriedly he makes inquiries on his way as to what the division is all about, or joins without inquiry a rush of his political colleagues, whose movements, he feels quite sure, will tell him the way he ought to go. Then, when the division has been duly gone through, he returns to his seat in the lobby up-

stairs. But where now is the idea which had just begun to shine upon him when the division bell rang? He sits down, resolutely declining to enter into conversation with any one, and endeavours to collect his thoughts. But while he is still engaged in this effort the sound of the division bell is heard anew, and he knows that some other question has been raised in the House, and that he is bound in pursuance of his representative duty to take his part in the division, even though he does not yet know what it is all about. Every member of the House of Commons has known of occasions when this practice of dividing and dividing has gone on with only the briefest intervals of debate through the whole of a sitting. Our novel-writing member has perhaps to go home to his bed without having advanced the story of his heroine by a single coherent sentence from the time when the first sound of the division bell terrified that sensitive creature out of every revelation of her heart's emotion.

But even if our friend is hopefully at work on a night when there are few or no divisions, it does not by any means follow that his imagination is allowed any the more to play its part undisturbed. Members are continually coming up and talking to him, asking questions of him, or making suggestions to him; for the ordinary member, familiar with the ways of the place, never thinks of refraining from putting a question to a brother member

merely because he happens to be engaged in writing. Probably he takes it for granted that the member with a pen in his hand and a sheet of paper spread out before him is only answering one of the countless letters of inquiring constituents, into which no one is supposed to throw his whole soul. Our novelist tries to talk and at the same time to keep in his mind what he has been writing about and where he left off. Then some other member, seeing the two engaged in conversation, comes up and joins in the talk, and the invisible heroine is once again thrust into the background for the time. Or it may be some more decided and distracting interruption occurs. The leading Whip of the party to which our romancist belongs comes, rapid and eager, up to him, and with a voice and looks proclaiming some purpose of immediate importance, tells him that the leader of the party wants our poor friend to go back to his place in the House and prepare to take at the earliest possible moment a part in the debate. "You see," the Whip declares, "that fellow Raggles is making a savage attack upon us, and has been firing away especially at you for something you said in your speech last week, and the chief says that you must get up and reply to him the moment he sits down if you get the chance." I have already said that our novel-writing friend is devoted to his Parliamentary duties and is always anxious to obey the orders of his Parliamentary

leader. There is nothing for it but to go back to his place in the House, and to leave the heart troubles of his distracted heroine to evaporate for the present as best they can. Our poor friend has to seize his first chance of replying to the attack made upon his party and himself, and perhaps the chance does not come for an hour or two after he has settled down in his place to wait for it, and then, when he has fired off his speech after the best fashion he could, he feels bound to remain and listen to what can be said on the other side. So at last the sitting comes to an end, and the story of his heroine, like that of "Cambuscan bold," is left half told.

The literary man or journalist of any school or order who endeavours to carry on his work while he occupies a seat in the House of Commons is always liable to such interruptions and distractions. But I think the novel-writer has especial claims upon our sympathy. Suppose the member is writing a leading article for a morning newspaper. To him, of course, the interruptions are perplexing and vexatious, but he knows what he wants to say; he has a case to make out with which he may be presumed to be thoroughly acquainted. After each interruption he can still go back to his South African question, or his preferential tariffs, and resume his work where he left it off, without finding that his mind has lost all grasp of the subject. In the same way if he is engaged on some histori-

cal work, let us say the history of the Free Trade movement, he may well feel displeased and put out by frequent interruptions, the more especially if the time for the completion of his work is drawing near. But at least he has not to trust to his imagination or his invention for any of the narrative, and when he returns to some interrupted page of his manuscript, he is not likely to find that during the interval he has lost any knowledge of what Peel or Cobden was doing or preparing to do at that particular time. But our novel-writer carries all his materials within his own mind; and if his mind be disturbed by frequent interruptions, the materials are apt to get scattered, and, being but light and vaporous, are likely to get blown away into "the infinite azure of the past." I am entitled to consider this question with a certain impartiality and with some personal experience; for I have tried to be journalist, novelist, and historical writer while an actively engaged member of the House of Commons.

During all the earlier years of my Parliamentary career I had to go through an exceptionally troublesome time. Shortly after my election for the county of Longford, the life of Isaac Butt came to an end, and at this time it was quite evident that Parnell was certain to obtain a complete control over the Irish Nationalist party. There was, however, an interval during which a man who represented those whom I may call the old-

fashioned Repealers, the late William Shaw, was chosen as successor to Butt. This was a sort of concession on the part of the majority of the Nationalist members, and was done with the hope that the followers of the dead Butt and of the living Parnell might thereby be brought into cohesion and unity. Parnell himself was not anxious to obtain the position of leader, and was quite willing to see his movement develop of its own accord. William Shaw was really a man of considerable ability, and might have made a very satisfactory leader at a period of less pressure and strain, but he was not equal to the demands of the period; and when after a short interval a general election took place and the reëlected Irish party met in Dublin to reconstruct their ranks, Parnell was proposed as leader in opposition to Shaw, and was made the victor by a large majority. The leader of the party bore the official title of Chairman, and it was now thought that there should also be a vice-chairman, in order that, in the possible absence of the leader, there might be some one invested with authority to carry on the work in his name. I was, to my own great surprise and I believe at Parnell's suggestion, elected to the office of vice-chairman, and thus invested with a responsibility which required of me a close and constant attendance during the sittings of the House.

Then came on those succeeding sessions of con-

tinuous obstruction which I have already briefly described — sessions during which Irish business occupied the greater part of the sittings of the House. But it was not only that the House was compelled to occupy itself thus often with our Irish business — there was also the fact that our policy compelled us often to take part in the discussion of measures concerning only the interests of England or Scotland or Wales. Parnell's policy was to force on the House of Commons the absolute conviction that until some set of statesmen should make up their minds to consider seriously and thoroughly the Irish national demands with a view to conceding them at as early a period as might be, it would be impossible for the House of Commons to maintain any control over the discharge of its ordinary business. Therefore, we, the Irish National members, were kept constantly on the watch for any opportunity of making our presence felt by the House, and as I now held an official position in the Party, I felt more than ever bound to remain in the House during the whole course of every session. I had therefore the most frequent and ample opportunity of satisfying myself as to the difficulties imposed upon a man who has to write leading articles, novels, and histories, in order to make a living, and is at the same time compelled by conscience, by devotion to a political cause, and by the responsibility of an official position to make the House of Commons his lit-

erary workshop as well as his political sojourn. I have no doubt that some of my literary work must have been seriously damaged by the conditions under which it was carried on, but I could only make the best of my difficult position. I could not think of withdrawing from Parliamentary life so long as I could be of the slightest service to the national cause, or could even take the humblest share in striving for its success. I can only say that if all were to do again, I should follow the same course, and accept the service of Ireland's cause as the main business of my career.

Yet despite all these difficulties and troubles, I still derived a certain personal enjoyment from the life and movement of the House of Commons. The members of that House very seldom carry their political animosities into their private and personal dealings. The most extreme Tory is on the friendliest terms with the advanced Radical when they meet in one of the dining-rooms or smoking-rooms or on the Terrace. Even while we were carrying on our most determined — and I have no doubt most disagreeable — obstruction, I was fortunate enough to make many warm friendships among men opposed to Home Rule as well as to obstruction. Then of course in the House of Commons one has the opportunity of coming into friendly intercourse with men whom it is a privilege to know. I shall have something to say about many of these men as I go on with my story, but

in the mean time I only desire to record my frank confession that, despite the incessant divisions and the all-night sittings, despite the exhausting efforts to make literature and politics work together, despite the interruptions to my novel and the cloud often cast over the fortunes of my heroine, I was still able to find elements of enjoyment in the atmosphere of the House of Commons.

On a memorable day in the April of 1881, my son and I were driving through some of the West End London streets in order to be present at a marriage festival when our eyes were attracted by a startling announcement on a placard outside the window of a newspaper vendor's shop. The placard proclaimed that the later and special editions of the morning papers contained the news of Lord Beaconsfield's death. My readers will readily understand that the announcement of that death did not allow us to keep our spirits quite in tone with the festivity in which we were about to take part. No matter how one may have been estranged by political opinions from any sympathy with Benjamin Disraeli's later career, it was quite impossible to learn that such a man had been removed from this living world, in which he had played so brilliant and so many-sided a part, without a profound shock and an abiding sense of gloom. With Lord Beaconsfield I never had the good fortune to come into any personal association. He had been removed to the House of Lords before I obtained a

seat in the House of Commons, and I never once met him in private life. I had indeed an opportunity which would otherwise have been very welcome — an opportunity of being introduced to him under very gratifying conditions, but I was compelled most reluctantly to forego the chance. A lady of my acquaintance who had long enjoyed Lord Beaconsfield's friendship told me that Beaconsfield had spoken very kindly of something written by me, and had expressed a wish to meet me. The lady was willing to make an arrangement for that purpose, and Disraeli accepted an invitation from her to a luncheon party to which I was to be invited. A number of eminent persons were also invited, one of them a member of the royal family. But I was not destined to meet any one royal in rank or in letters at that gathering. Just before the day appointed for the luncheon a number of my political colleagues in the Irish National party were arrested in Ireland under the operations of the exceptional laws which then prevailed there, and were committed to prison for some supposed offence in spoken words against the British Constitution. I felt but little inclined for festivity under such circumstances, and I knew that at the luncheon I should be sure to meet some members of the Administration, and I could not endure the idea of settling myself down to social enjoyment of such a kind at such a time, even if by some strange chance no paragraph about the luncheon party were to find

its way into the columns of the "Morning Post." So I made my excuses to my hostess and privately gave her my reasons, and I renounced the chance of meeting Lord Beaconsfield, who died not very long after.

CHAPTER XIV

A WANDERING HOLIDAY

In the early autumn of 1881 I made up my mind to take a somewhat long holiday. During the first year of my work as a member of Parliament a great change had come over my life, on which I shall not allow myself to dwell at any length here. My wife, who had long been suffering from severe ill health, came to the end of her mortal troubles. Death removed her from this world on her birthday in August, and on her tombstone are carved among its other inscriptions the lines from Shakespeare: —

> "This day I breathed first; time is come round,
> And where I did begin there shall I end;
> My life is run his compass."

My son and daughter and I sought rest after this calamity for a few weeks in Germany, chiefly in Heidelberg and Weimar, and then came back to English life again to do the best we could under the changed conditions. But after another year, given up by me almost entirely to the work of the House of Commons, I thought that I might fairly be allowed to devote the whole of the Parliamentary recess to some prolonged and reviving travel,

much needed for all three of us. We revisited some familiar places — dear old Dutch cities among the rest, and Berlin and Dresden. Then we went to Prague, and made some stay in that which Thackeray has declared allusively to be the most picturesque city in the world. We went to Vienna and Buda-Pesth, wandered about Hungary, descended through the Austrian Tyrol to Trieste, and from Trieste steamed to Corfu, and thence to Athens. None of us three had seen the shores of Greece before, and Athens had been to us for a long time — to me indeed from my very boyhood — a city of dreams and longings and unspeakable interest. I can only say of it that, for all its modern ways and its modernised buildings, the existing Athens realised the dream city of my youth. I cannot help feeling glad that at the time when we landed there was not a train running from Piræus to Athens, and therefore we went from the port to the capital by means of horses and wheels, just as might have been done in the days of Pericles, and no scream of a railway engine forced us back into the present. I shall never forget the scene which opened before us on the first morning after our arrival, when we stood on the steps of the Parthenon and looked upon Samos and the sea. But I do not intend to indulge here in descriptions of the Parthenon or the Acropolis or the plain of Marathon, or any other of the sights or scenes which we looked upon with what may

well be called a feeling of reverence. We spent a month in Athens, and after my return to England I wrote a novel, the whole scene of which was laid in Greece, and for the most part in the city of the Violet Crown.

From Greece we went to Constantinople, thence to Egypt, where we read Eastern stories while floating along the Nile, and then to the Holy Land and Jerusalem. To look upon Jerusalem, to wander through Jerusalem, gave me the only experience of travel to be found in this world which could call up yet deeper emotions than even Athens could in my mind and heart. When we left Jerusalem on our homeward way, we had to spend four dreary days in Jaffa waiting for a steamer to take us on board. The weather was stormy, and the harbour of Jaffa, if it can indeed be called a harbour, was barricaded with rocks, which in such weather rendered it dangerous for any steamer to approach within reasonable distance of the shore. During these four days the rain streamed down very much as it might have done on the Cornish or the Irish coast, and we were compelled to stay for the most part in the shelter of a very dismal and unpicturesque German hotel, which a Teutonic proprietor bearing the unalluring name of Hardegg had established in that region. The Germans were even at that time doing their best to obtain a monopoly of hotel keeping and coach driving in the Holy Land.

We did all we could during the intervals of rain to study every place of interest in and around Jaffa, and we gathered much fruit, not unpaid for, in the orange gardens. Whatever might have been our complainings as to the weather, it was still something to find ourselves enjoying even an enforced leisure in a region made sacred by so many associations. I may mention one incident of our stay in Jaffa which had something bordering on the comic in it, although at the time its burlesque effect was unknown to us. The day appointed for the opening of the Parliamentary session was approaching, and I was anxious to make it known to my colleagues that I hoped to be in London before the debate on the address in reply to the royal Speech from the Throne could have come to its conclusion. I therefore sent by submarine telegraph a message to one of the Whips of the party, telling him that I was unexpectedly detained in Jaffa, but that I should start on my way homeward by the first available steamer. Through some mysterious process of transformation on its way, the message was delivered to my Parliamentary colleague as dated from Java, and I afterwards heard that it created for the time some bewilderment as to why I should have gone so far outside the range of travel which I was understood to have undertaken.

After several days the violence of the storm lessened somewhat; a steamer bound for Port

Said came in sight, was promptly hailed, and was able to lie off at a considerable distance from the shore. We had to reach the steamer in an open boat rowed by native seamen; the waves were still running very high, and on that dangerous coast the enterprise was sufficiently perilous to make us all frankly eager for its safe conclusion. Yet at one moment our perilous passage was threatened with a whimsical repetition. After we had cleared the rocks and were rising and falling in the furious waves, our dragoman suddenly startled us with shrill cries of alarm. He had bought some oranges on the quay just before embarking, and now discovered to his dismay that he was a few copper coins short of the change due to him. He began shrieking wild directions to the rowers to put the boat about and return to Jaffa with all speed, in order to collect the missing treasure. As, however, the prospect of a king's ransom would scarcely have tempted us to renew the perils we had yet scarcely escaped, we sternly forbade this retrogression, and our dragoman, with despair on his face, resigned himself to the inevitable loss. We pursued our stormy course, and after what seemed an age-long time were safely hauled on board the steamer and were on our way to Port Said. From Port Said we returned to Cairo, where we stopped for a short while, and then sailed by a P. & O. steamer from Alexandria to Brindisi.

At the Brindisi custom house we met with an

incident which seemed to belong to the regions of the burlesque. I was provided of course with all the necessary passports, and I made it known of my own accord that I had in my possession a few cigars on which I was willing to pay the needed duty. There seemed to be much commotion at the custom house, and my declarations that these were all the cigars I had did not appear to satisfy the authorities. These authorities were evidently not much impressed by the disclaimers of a British deputy of Parliament, and they insisted on having the luggage of the whole party thoroughly ransacked for vast quantities of foreign tobacco. During this period of delay I heard from some friendly officials that the authorities had been on the lookout for the arrival of a mysterious consignment of cigars, to be smuggled through without paying duty, and that this consignment was to come in a P. & O. steamer, and they therefore set me down as a likely man to carry out such a fell design. At last, however, we got through, and were allowed to take the next train for Rome. During my journey to Rome I accidentally heard that the wicked invader who had planned the smuggling of the mass of cigars had disguised himself in the costume of a British merchant seaman, and while the officials were searching my harmless luggage, had actually contrived to get the rough bundle in which his cigars were quietly stowed away safely

through the custom house without let or hindrance from the authorities.

From Rome I sent a wire to a colleague in London, and found that it was not necessary for me to make my return quite so precipitate as I had intended. We gave ourselves therefore the pleasure of a few days' rest in Rome, and saw once again scenes and sights, churches and art galleries, which we had seen many times before. The remainder of our journey was, except for a short stay in Paris, merely a direct and rapid return home. The travelling of that autumn and winter was the longest travel I have ever yet had — I mean for the mere sake of rest to the mind and enjoyment in the seeing of strange countries. I have had longer bouts of travel during my visits to America, but then in America my longest journeyings took the form of lecture tours, and had practical and business-like objects in view. But the autumn and winter which I devoted to travel in 1881 and 1882 was done with no purpose but that of seeing famous places and giving a new turn to the thoughts and a new colour to the lives of my son and daughter and myself.

I formed during our wanderings the idea of writing three novels, the first of which was to have its scene laid in Athens, the second in Constantinople, and the third in Jerusalem. In each case my intention was to shape the story so that it might describe the experiences of travellers from

England or Ireland in these cities, and not to attempt an experiment which I knew was beyond my reach — the experiment to describe the lives and feelings of persons born and brought up in Athens or Constantinople or Jerusalem. I have already said that after my return to England I accomplished the first of my three projected stories. I published "Maid of Athens" as a serial in a monthly magazine, and afterwards in the three volumes which then still made the regulation form of a novel. But the story about Constantinople and the story about Jerusalem have never been told, and have never been even attempted thus far by me. The increasing pressure of Parliamentary work compelled me time after time to put off to some indefinite future any literary enterprise which could bear postponement. I should have liked to accomplish the three stories; but I fear that if even by some strange chance I were yet to have leisure for the work, I should have to renew my impressions of the life of Constantinople and Jerusalem before I could venture to complete my enterprise with any hope of accomplishing good work. I have, however, one consolation to sustain me in the frustration of my enterprise — I can always tell myself that the Constantinople story and the Jerusalem story would have been, if only I could have found time to write them, much more meritorious productions than the one which I actually presented to the world. We returned from

our wanderings not very long after the opening of Parliament. A keen struggle, destined to be prolonged for a considerable time, had already set in between the Liberal Government and the members of the Irish National party. The condition of Ireland was of course the occasion for this struggle. We, the Nationalists, had expected great things from the new Liberal Administration under Mr. Gladstone, which had been in power for some time before the date at which I have now arrived, and those expectations had thus far not been fulfilled. They had, in fact, been utterly disappointed. The land tenure system of Ireland had been making life almost unendurable to the cottier tenantry, and among the immediate results of these conditions were the alarming increase of emigration and the disturbed state of the country. No one could doubt that Mr. Gladstone's Government was anxious to introduce great reforms in the land tenure system, but in the mean time the energy of the authorities in Dublin Castle had been directed almost exclusively to the maintenance of what was officially described as order, instead of to the carrying out of the reforms which alone could have made order possible.

The Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, in other words the Secretary of State for Ireland, was Mr. William Edward Forster, whom the Irish members had always regarded as a sincere and enlightened friend of their country. Mr. Forster

had won for himself a high reputation as a genuine Liberal of the most enlightened class, a friend of peace, progress, and reform, and a sympathiser with Ireland's just claims for relief from the laws and systems by which she had been so long oppressed. In his earlier days Mr. Forster and his father had personally rendered much service to the famine-stricken population of Ireland during those seasons of gloom and terror when the failure of the potato crop spread desolation throughout the island. I had known Mr. Forster during the days of my connection with the "Morning Star," and had always regarded him as an earnest advocate of the general policy of Cobden and Bright. Like all my political colleagues, I had welcomed the news of his appointment to the Irish office as the opening of a new chapter in the history of Irish administration. But it soon turned out that our hopes were destined to be disappointed. I could never explain to myself the reasons why Mr. Forster's experiment in Irish administration turned out so complete a failure. It was impossible to believe that he had not meant well for Ireland, that he was not in full sympathy with her just claims, and yet his administration seemed only to make things worse and not better day after day. The best conclusion at which I could or can arrive was that Mr. Forster must have become disappointed with Ireland even before Ireland had become disappointed with him. My theory was and

is that when he accepted the Irish office he took it for granted that the Irish people in general would appreciate his purposes, and would feel sure that if they would only wait patiently and let him have his way, they would soon find the chapter of agrarian reform and political equality opening for them under his inspiration. I assume that from the moment when he settled down to his work in Ireland he expected to find the oppressed Irish tenants proclaiming a truce with their oppressive landlords, and waiting in absolute quietude for the coming of the good time. No such truce, however, was proclaimed or was likely under the conditions to be proclaimed, and then, according to my idea, Mr. Forster became disappointed with the Irish people, and could think of no better policy than that of forcing them to keep quiet while he prepared the way for better legislation. On the part of the Irish agricultural tenants it has to be said that the measures proposed by Forster's Government for the reform of the land laws did not seem adequate to the occasion and to the objects in view, and indeed all the later history of Ireland and of legislation for Ireland has only proved more and more convincingly how utterly inadequate those earlier measures were. The Irish agricultural tenants did not keep quiet, and could hardly have been expected to keep quiet. The struggle between the tenant and the landlord was one for life or death so far as the tenant was concerned.

"Live, horse, and you will get grass," is a proverb which illustrates effectively enough the spirit of the statesmanship which appealed to Ireland to desist from agitation and wait patiently for gradual reforms. The agitation went on as vehemently as ever, and Forster seems to have made up his mind to repress it by measures more peremptory and severe than had ever been tried before. Ireland was subjected to the working of a whole system of exceptional legislation, by virtue of which Dublin Castle was enabled to deal in absolute and even despotic fashion with the liberties and the lives of men.

I remember well that while I was travelling on the Continent I stayed at the Kaiserhof in Berlin, and it was there we heard for the first time that Parnell, John Dillon, Sexton, and O'Kelly had been arrested in Ireland and consigned to prison merely on the ground that they were "suspects"; in other words that they were suspected of promoting disturbance and sedition. This was one of the new and exceptional acts by which it was thought possible to reduce Ireland to silence and passiveness while the Liberal Government was preparing measures to make things work more smoothly in the future. The disturbances in most parts of Ireland grew worse and worse through the working of this sort of legislation, and the feeling of the people turned, within a comparatively short time, from confident hope into some-

thing like despair. Forster seemed to have become for the hour a mere reactionist in political principles, and, reversing the policy of John Bright when he proclaimed that for the ills of Ireland force is no remedy, was acting on the conviction that force is the only remedy. Of course the news of this strange display of Liberal administration made the Irish in the United States more than ever energetic in their appeals to their countrymen at home not to submit tamely to the exceptional laws which Forster was forcing on them.

When I returned to the House of Commons, I found this new struggle between the Irish party and the Government in full operation. It was indeed something of a novelty for me to have to associate Forster with a system of exceptional and despotic legislation, of free speech prohibited and forcibly suppressed, of imprisonment without trial and without limit of sentence. I took part in some of the debates, and I could not help expressing in strong terms my surprise and disappointment at the course which such a man as William Edward Forster, the Forster of the past, had suddenly taken it on him to pursue. If I may be allowed to say something in my own praise, I think the best speech I ever made in the House of Commons — I do not say that it was a good speech, but only that it was my best — was made in reply to one of Mr. Forster's during a debate in that memorable session. The close of my speech was a decla-

ration which at the time I felt justified in making, although it grieved me to have to make it, that, in paraphrase of some famous words, it had rarely been given to any human being to do so much good for humanity as Mr. Forster had prevented in Ireland.

The rule of the iron hand went on for a time in Ireland as before, and things only grew worse and worse. The end came, however, very soon. Gladstone and the majority of his Cabinet determined to release the imprisoned "suspects" and to abandon the policy of mere despotism, benevolent or otherwise, in Irish affairs, and the immediate result was that Mr. Forster resigned office. Lord Cowper, who had been Viceroy of Ireland, also resigned; but the world in general took less notice at the time of the Lord Lieutenant's resignation than it did of Forster's withdrawal from his nominally subordinate post. After that time I saw but little of Forster and hardly ever had any conversation with him. I have always regarded him as, according to the familiar saying, a good man gone wrong. I cannot but believe that when he first took office as Irish Secretary he had a great opportunity before him, and that he missed it mainly because he did not at a crisis of great difficulty, calling for much patience and much faith, remain true to the principles he had learned from great teachers, and had followed out manfully through the whole of his earlier career.

CHAPTER XV

LIBERAL COERCION

My family and I occupied for a short time a furnished flat in Grosvenor Mansions, Victoria Street, and I may say that Victoria Street was at that time almost altogether given up to private flats and offices, and there was not, I think, a single shop on either side of it. A glance at Victoria Street lately made me feel deeply impressed by its living illustration of the ravages of time and change. Then we tried for a while various lodgings in the St. James's quarter, and settled down for many years in a house in Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea, not far from the house in which Thomas Carlyle had lived. I was brought more and more into association with men who bore names eminent in politics, science, literature, and art.

In literary life I knew many distinguished men and women, including Robert Browning, Thomas Hardy, Bret Harte, Henry James, Anna Cora Steele, Miss Braddon, Froude, Freeman, and Lecky. Among men of science I knew Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer. I have already spoken of some of the painters whom I knew, and my friends among actors and actresses included

Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham, Ellen Terry, the Bancrofts, the Kendals, and John Lawrence Toole. Of all these distinguished men and women, and of many others whom I have known, I have already written a good deal in other books of mine, and I am not inclined to indulge in unnecessary repetitions at the expense of my readers. I mention certain names here only in this passing fashion as they serve to illustrate the story of my own life, and to tell how much it was brightened by the good fortune which brought me into association with such men and women. I have always felt and still feel that the events of my life — I mean of my private and personal life — which must ever give me the highest gratification are those which brought me into companionship with such leaders of intellectual thought, of political movement, of literature, science, and art.

Coming back to my occupations in the House of Commons, I may say that Gladstone was already beginning to be regarded by most of us as a statesman destined sooner or later to show himself favourable to the Irish national cause. He had already brought in and carried a measure for the reform of the Irish land tenure system, which, although it wanted much of the elements of complete success, was yet the first serious and statesmanlike act which had ever been passed for the abolition of an odious system of agricultural serfdom. For the time, however, we, the Irish National members,

had to expect measures of coercion from a Liberal as well as from a Tory administration, and we were brought into collision with Gladstone and his colleagues as often as with the leaders of the Conservative party. We therefore carried on our system of obstruction as unreservedly and as aggressively towards the one party as towards the other, and I remember how strange it appeared to me when, on more than one occasion, we found ourselves in political hostility to John Bright, who had been the true friend of Ireland when she had hardly any other friend among the English representatives in the House of Commons. It sometimes went very much against the grain with me to have to join in such a struggle, but I thoroughly recognised the fact that the policy of Parnell was our only available means of compelling the House and the country to give at last a full attention to Ireland's national claims.

Unlike many of my colleagues, I had always felt a profound respect for the constitution and the history of the House of Commons. To some of my friends in the Irish party the House of Commons was merely one of the weapons of tyrannical oppression by which England was enabled to keep Ireland in servitude. It seemed to them only a part of the enemy's war machinery, and every course of action which could enfeeble it and render it helpless and even ridiculous was to them always deserving of sympathy and applause.

I could not look at things from this point of view. I had always regarded the House of Commons, whatever might have been its defects and its shortcomings, as a powerful agency in the development of constitutional and religious equality, and my main desire in public life was to see the establishment of such an institution in Ireland for the government of the Irish people by the Irish people. The possibility of Ireland becoming a thoroughly independent state, a self-ruling republic, let us say, lying close to the shores of Great Britain, seemed to me to be so far outside the range of human vision as not to call for serious consideration in days like ours. If the world ever becomes so enlightened and civilised that small countries like Ireland are allowed to maintain their independence without let or hindrance from great and powerful neighbouring states, then, indeed, I admit that patriotic Irishmen might well give themselves up to the effort for Ireland's absolute independence. But I could not see any prospect of such a condition in human affairs, and I should have been content with a compromise which should give to Ireland the entire management and control of her own legislation, while she yet remained a member of the British Imperial system.

John Bright in one of his great speeches declared that if Ireland could be loosed from her moorings in the Atlantic and floated over to the American shore, she would probably become pros-

perous and thoroughly contented as a State of the Union. But, as he pointed out, the essential trouble in the condition of things was that Ireland had been placed in such close proximity to Great Britain that it was hardly possible to hope she could be allowed to become and continue an independent State. Bright always affirmed that the duty of the English Parliament was to give to Ireland such systems of internal government as Ireland would have given to herself if she had accomplished a successful revolution. In his later days Bright refused to support the Home Rule movement, but I have never thought that in that refusal he was acting inconsistently with his former opinions. He was opposed to the idea of separate Parliaments for the two islands, just as he was opposed to the idea of a separate Parliament for Scotland; but he held to the principle that the Irish representatives in the Imperial Parliament should be allowed to deal with Irish measures, as the Scottish members are now and have long been allowed to deal with Scottish measures. I have always felt that this end could never be realised in the Imperial Parliament, where the Irish members constitute but a very small minority, and where they have not the influence and the advantage of such conditions of union as those which Scotland insisted on obtaining before she consented to give up her national legislature, and to be content with representation in the English Parlia-

ment. My views for Ireland were and still are satisfied with the principle of separate legislation for the Irish people in a Parliament of their own, and I believe that if Home Rule were conceded to Ireland, she might become as prosperous and as contented a partner in the Imperial system as Canada or Australia. To accomplish that end, I had become convinced that the system of obstruction, rough and ready as it might seem to be, was absolutely essential under all the conditions to compel the English people to give serious attention to the Irish national demands. Therefore I took my willing part in the carrying out of Parnell's policy, and I had my turn of being occasionally "suspended from the service of the House," — in other words, turned out of the representative chamber, — and of being occasionally called to order and bidden by the voice of the Speaker to resume my seat. It was not always very pleasant work for me, who had been for more than quarter of a century a resident of England, and had formed many close friendships and some relationships there, and had been doing my best to win for myself a position in English literature and journalism. During these troublous times of obstruction, I found that the intense feeling aroused among the general English public against the Irish obstructionists had a distinct effect on the sale of my books; but I felt sure that this feeling would not last, and in any case it could not have

weighed for a moment with me when compared with the fulfilment of my duty to my own country and her national cause. I was convinced that if Parnell's policy had a fair trial, it would accomplish its object, and I am certain at the present moment that no other policy could have brought us so directly on the road to a recognition of our national claims. We had a rightful cause to plead, and I held so high an opinion of the just feeling of Englishmen in general as to believe that if we could only compel them to study that cause, they would be brought to recognise its justice. I knew that among many of my Parliamentary colleagues there had grown up, through the influence of generations and centuries, a detestation of English rule which made them feel a gratification in the mere obstruction of England's Parliamentary work. With me obstruction was simply a means to an end, as I feel sure it also was with Parnell. I believed that the time must come when English public opinion would frankly admit that obstruction had done good service for England as well as for Ireland, by compelling the attention of the ruling majority to the fact that the Irish minority represented a just cause, without the full recognition and satisfaction of which there never could be genuine peace and contentment among the European members of the Imperial system.

When the policy of obstruction was first put in motion, it had only a very small number of prac-

tical adherents. For some time after I became a member of the House, only some seven or eight of us used to pass into the division lobbies under the leadership of Parnell. Even then we almost always had some three or four British representatives to go into the lobby with us every time that we made up our minds to divide the House. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Joseph Cowen, and Henry Labouchere were always among our English supporters, and there were others too who gave us their friendly aid without heeding the denunciation and misrepresentation which it brought upon them from many even of their own constituents. But the Irish National party soon came to include the great majority of the Irish representatives, and the idea began to be borne in upon the minds of English statesmen, and an intelligent minority of Englishmen, that Parnell was not practising his obstruction policy for the mere purpose of disturbing the British House of Commons, but that he had a genuine cause to plead, and that this was the only practical means of obtaining a hearing. All sorts of new rules were introduced, and were carried by majorities, to limit the freedom of debate, or, in other words, to reduce the Irish National party to a state of impotence. In some instances the alterations of the rules were reasonable enough in themselves and were of some advantage to the general conduct of the business; but it was pointed out again and again

with much justice that so long as there was an hostile minority in the House of Commons, — I mean a minority compelled by principle to take the part of united hostility to the majority, — it would be utterly impossible to prevent obstruction. Every member of Parliament must be assumed to have an equal right to speak on any question, and it would not be endurable that the Speaker should be permitted to determine beforehand that this or that particular member should never be allowed an opportunity of addressing the House. If, however, Mr. Speaker could not act on some such principle, it would be impossible to prevent any member from rising to prolong a debate at the time when the discussion seemed exhausted for all practical purposes, induce some other member to rise in his turn and offer a reply, and thus occupy hour after hour in purely obstructive discussion. The members of the obstructive party might, if they thought fit, take up different sides of the controversy, and so give some plausible excuse for keeping up the debate. One member of the obstructive party might speak in condemnation of some particular measure or clause, and when he had exhausted his argument on the subject a colleague of his might get up and express his great surprise at the views just made known by his honourable friend, and go on to confute them with yet greater prolixity than his honourable friend had employed in setting them forth. Then a third obstructionist might

rise and express views of his own differing from utter condemnation of the measure on one hand and unlimited approval of it on the other, and so on until the whole obstructive party had spent their forces in what might plausibly be represented as fair, independent, business-like discussion. The Speaker could hardly rise and interpose to prevent any one particular member from continuing the discussion merely because he belonged to a party which had often obstructed, and thus, although each member spoke for but comparatively a short time, and the differing views of the orators proclaimed no concerted plan of action, the regular business of the House might be most effectively delayed and thrown out of gear.

I remember one remarkable instance in which a great Prime Minister gave an entirely new and most tempting opportunity to the obstructive party to exercise their policy. An Irish National member was making a speech which gave great offence by its tone and its evident purpose to the occupants of the Treasury bench, and Mr. Gladstone himself got up and moved that the honourable member be no longer heard. Now it appears that the motion made by Mr. Gladstone was absolutely in order, although the occasions were very rare when such a motion had been formally made. It was not likely that Mr. Gladstone would propose any motion not within the limits of Parliamentary order; but the exercise of this right has always

been limited to occasions when the member against whom it is directed is making allegations or uttering sentiments which are believed to be a positive offence against Parliamentary usages. Mr. Gladstone's motion was accepted by the Speaker as in order, and a debate upon it took place at once. During that debate one of the Irish Nationalist members invited the attention of the House to the new impulse to obstruction and the new opportunities for the working of the obstructive policy which were given by the action of the Prime Minister. The Irish member reminded the House that a Prime Minister has no especial privilege for making such a motion, and that a similar motion could be made just as well by any other member of the House. At any moment an Irish National member would be at liberty, following the precedent set by Mr. Gladstone, to interrupt the orator addressing the House and to move that he be no longer heard, and thereupon would set in an extemporaneous debate. When that question had been disposed of and the regular business of the sitting was again going on, another Irish member might rise and move that some speaker then addressing the House be no longer heard, and thereupon would arise another debate and another division. Where was the rule of order to prevent or to limit this method of obstruction? If the motion was in order when made by the Prime Minister, how could it become obviously or constructively out

of order when made by a private member? I do not now remember what came of the whole discussion, but I know that Mr. Gladstone's action was hardly ever imitated by any other member of an administration, and that the House would have been put into new difficulties and troubles if the Irish party had made his motion a precedent and an authority for an entirely new development of obstruction.

The lesson taught by the whole incident was that Irish obstruction could only be thoroughly got rid of by the fair consideration and the statesmanlike removal of Irish national grievances. The Irish obstructive party knew full well that they had behind them the entire and the undeviating approval and support of the vast majority of Irishmen at home and abroad. With such a force encouraging them and cheering them on, it was not likely that they could be deterred from their efforts by any number of temporary exclusions from the precincts of the House. The results speak for themselves. With the recognition by English statesmen that Ireland had genuine grievances of which to complain, and with the resolve displayed by Conservatives and Liberals alike to consider those grievances and find the means for their removal, the obstructive policy of the Irish Parliamentary party came to an end. It had done its work, and these words form its epitaph and its vindication.

CHAPTER XVI

HOLIDAYS IN IRELAND

My political occupations gave me many opportunities of revisiting Ireland, my native country. It became my duty to attend great public meetings in Ireland, to support the National candidates at bye-elections, and to assist in the formation of new branches of the National league. All this involved a frequent rush of travel at night from Euston Square Station to Holyhead and thence across to Ireland, many a railway expedition into some out-of-the-way part of the country, and a rapid return to London, in order to take part in some important Parliamentary division. All this interfered very materially with the progress of my literary work; but I felt no inclination to evade my political duties, and it was ever a pleasure to me to revisit Ireland amid whatever hurry and excitement. No part of Ireland was strange to me; each spot that I visited brought up some interesting associations in my mind. It always pleased my thoughts to make a mental comparison between Ireland as I had seen her in the past and Ireland as I looked on her in the present, to note whatever changes had taken place, and to see indica-

tions wherever they were to be seen of political and social improvement.

I had been possessed from my earliest days, and am still possessed, by what some of my friends regard as a mania for the associations of the past. At any time I should be prepared to go far out of my way merely for the sake of looking at some house or street or river which I looked upon in former days. My own belief is, that I should have made, if the powers above had so ordained it, a champion ghost, because of the inextinguishable delight I should always have found in transporting myself hither and thither among the scenes of my former experiences. When, added to this sentimental feeling, I had a sense of being engaged in active work for Ireland's cause on Ireland's soil, I felt as if I was growing young again in the congenial atmosphere. I found myself more than ever an Irishman as I went with my new mission into so many once familiar places. I took part in many public meetings in Dublin; I addressed audiences in my own native city, Cork; I presented myself at great popular meetings in Limerick, in Waterford, in Belfast, and in Derry city. Much as I disliked the turmoil and the trouble of contested elections, it was something to know that a contest could only take place at that time against the recognised and traditional opponents of the Irish National cause, the Tories in the South and the Orangemen in the North, and I had my own friends around

me wherever I went. Some years later there came an unhappy time when the division in the Irish party itself set friend against friend, and when, even in my native city, I found myself denounced by Irish Nationalists, as sincerely devoted to their cause as I could be, who for the time had taken a side different from mine in the dispute which was distracting the National party. Of that I shall have to say something in a future chapter; for the present I am dealing especially with the period before any such dispute had arisen, and when in every contested election the Irish Nationalist members fought side by side. Wherever I went, if the work of speech-making and organising allowed me a chance, I always found delight in visiting once again some spot made dear to me by old associations. I had some amusing experiences during the various contested elections; but, on the whole, there was far less of disturbance and of vindictiveness than might have been expected under such conditions. The furious old days described by such writers as Charles Lever seemed to have passed away altogether, and there was much more of good humour in these Irish contests than I have seen in many English electoral struggles.

During this part of my life I enjoyed a regular holiday tour in Ireland. My son and daughter and I made up our minds to forego for that year our

usual visit to some part of the Continent, and to pass our time in Ireland. We were accompanied by a young English friend of my daughter, Miss Mabel Robinson, authoress since then of "Mr. Butler's Ward" and other successful novels. Miss Robinson had never been in Ireland before, and we were resolved that she should see as many as possible of Ireland's most beautiful historic scenes. We began naturally with Dublin, and we arrived there at a time of unusual interest. A monument to Daniel O'Connell was to be unveiled in the great thoroughfare which had long borne the name of Sackville Street, but was thenceforward to be called O'Connell Street. I do not know of any city in Europe which can show a street more splendidly suited to set off a great public ceremonial. We were staying at the Gresham hotel in O'Connell Street, and had only to look from our windows in order to have a full view of the great national demonstration. I had never had an opportunity of seeing O'Connell during his days of power as leader and orator. I saw him but once, and that was towards the closing years of his life, at a time when his health had completely broken down and his voice was no longer equal to the task of making itself heard throughout any large assembly. Many of my readers will probably remember that affecting passage in Disraeli's life of Lord George Bentinck which describes O'Connell's last appearance in the House of Commons and the

pathetic feeling created by the contrast between the feeble tones and the slow articulation of the speaker and the voice of magnificent music and power which used at one time to thrill the House. The one occasion when I heard O'Connell speak lives always in my memory. The great Irish Tribune was delivering an address to a number of youths of the Catholic schools of Cork, and the state of his health rendered it impossible for him to stand up during the few sentences which he uttered. He remained seated all the time, and in the farther part of the room we were hardly able to follow completely a single sentence. I can well recall to memory the kind of awe which came over us young lads when we thus tried to hear the great O'Connell, and I felt in a strange sort of way that it was something of a recompense to me for my disappointment on that occasion to find myself now taking part in the magnificent national tribute to O'Connell's career which the capital of Ireland had thus effectively organised.

There were many public meetings and festivities at that time, and a national exhibition of Irish products invited the attention of strangers as well as residents. Parnell was seen at many of these gatherings, and was then the most conspicuous figure wherever he went. Our friend Mabel Robinson had the happy chance of seeing Dublin under conditions which peculiarly illustrated the national life in some of its most important movements.

After leaving Dublin we went, like Dr. Syntax of old, in search of the picturesque, and one has not to travel very far in quest of the picturesque when he is wandering through Ireland. Of course we paid a visit to Killarney, and we spent many days in that enchanted lake country. I am myself an especial lover of lake scenery, and am well acquainted with the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, the Scottish lakes, the lakes of Switzerland and Italy, and those exquisite smaller lakes of America which are not to be described as inland seas. But I do not think that the Lakes of Killarney would, on the whole, suffer by comparison with any of these that I have mentioned. Each lake country has, of course, its own peculiarities and its own atmosphere, and must therefore be judged upon its own conditions; but even when its skies are grey, I think the Killarney lake land has an enchantment of its own which needs not to fear any competition. I had been very familiar with Killarney during my days of newspaper work in Ireland, and had never been able quite to satisfy myself as to which of the three lakes had the greatest fascination for me. Now that I had come back to the old region of delight after an absence of many years, the lakes seemed to show themselves to me as even more beautiful than my memory had pictured them. They bore with them now the charms of association as well as the fascination of novelty: the magic of the past and the

present brought together and made one. Our English friend was especially charmed by the songs of the boatmen as they rowed us on the lakes, and with the manner in which they waked the echoes between the mountains. She enjoyed, too, the picturesque ride on horseback from one lake to another through the mystery-haunted Gap of Dunloe. She was charmed with the legendary store which the boatmen and the guides had always at command for the instruction of strangers, and she took a peculiar pleasure in asking questions of our escort and drawing forth their prompt and amusing or half-poetical replies. She was already fast becoming a convert to the principles of Irish Nationalism, and we used to say that if her mind continued to improve at the same rate of progress, she would soon become more Irish than the Irish themselves. Then we wandered off to the west and travelled through the marvellous regions of Connemara, and studied ancient Galway, and lingered by lakes little known then to the ordinary tourist, but which hardly yielded in charm even to the Killarney lakes themselves, and along the banks of rivers which Spenser might have sung of with as loving a worship as that which he gave to the Blackwater. It was here that all the party except myself heard Gaelic spoken for the first time, and also heard the peasants who spoke English speak it obviously as a foreign language. Miss Robinson was greatly struck by

the natural and simple courtesy which the ordinary peasants on the roads displayed, and the willing trouble they took to direct us on our way or to tell us of any legends which hallowed each particular spot. On one occasion, however, she was somewhat puzzled by an answer which the driver of a jaunting-car we had hired gave to a question propounded by her. He was telling us of some murders committed on the agents or bailiffs of landlords in a different part of the country, and she asked him whether such outrages never took place in the region through which we were then passing. He answered promptly and decisively, "Oh, no, Miss — not convanient here." What the poor man meant to convey was that no such outrages had taken place anywhere near to the part of the country we were now traversing, "convanient" being the familiar way of describing nearness to any particular place. She assumed it to mean that the people in the region we were then traversing did not find it convenient to shoot landlords there, because, perhaps, of the intrusive watchfulness of the authorities, but not because of any conscientious objection to murder. She was greatly amused when we explained to her the meaning of the poor man's expression, and made it clear to her that such was his meaning by decoying him into the use of the same phrase on other occasions during the drive. I have often thought that many a Saxon tourist might have founded a whole

theory as to Irish character on such a misinterpretation of a local phrase, and that if Miss Robinson, afterwards a writer of novels, had been a tourist of the ordinary kind, she might have laid it down as a rule for the instruction of her English readers that an Irish peasant only disapproves of murder when the deed is likely to be attended by any personal inconvenience to himself or his friends.

We paid a visit to Limerick, the famous city of the Violated Treaty, and wandered through all the beautiful scenery which surrounds the beautiful town. We spent a good deal of time in studying all those parts of the town and the surrounding country which are associated with Gerald Griffin's exquisite novel "The Collegians." We visited Garryowen because it was the home of the ill-fated heroine of that sad story. I have always felt convinced that "The Collegians" is, on the whole, the greatest novel Ireland has yet brought forth. It is rich in native humour, and it is at the same time suffused with that peculiar and poetic melody which seems to belong to the atmosphere and the music of Ireland. There are characters in it which for rich and genuine Irish humour are equal to anything ever created even by the best of the novelists who have given themselves up to depicting the merely comic sides of Irish life. In no other Irish novel that I know of are the different accents, phrases, and other oral peculiarities of the Irish provinces so clearly and correctly illustrated.

In many an Irish novel the Connaught peasant frequently talks with the brogue of Munster, and even the Ulster man occasionally drops into some phrase peculiar to Leinster. But in "The Collegians" every peasant talks the talk of his own region, and has the ways that belong especially to it. Then there are scattered through the novel songs and ballads of the most exquisite poetic feeling, — songs and ballads which speak out the heart of the Gaelic race and carry music in their very words. It was therefore an especial delight to us to linger round every spot associated with the figures in that strangely humorous and strangely melancholy story.

To most English men and women of recent days the story of "The Collegians" and of Eily O'Connor is associated chiefly, often indeed altogether, with the drama of the "Colleen Bawn" and the characters more or less created by Dion Boucicault. Now Dion Boucicault was a great actor and a thoroughly national Irishman, who at the very height of his popularity in London never made any concealment of his political sentiments, or of his admiration for Parnell, with whom I had the honour of bringing him into personal acquaintanceship. But the story of "The Collegians" is no more to be appreciated through the medium of the "Colleen Bawn" than Scott's great romance "The Bride of Lammermoor" is to be appreciated through the opera of which Lucia is the heroine.

It is a romance which must be read for itself, and perhaps, to be enjoyed to the very full, it ought to be read amid the scenery which it describes with such a vivid and sympathetic pencil. I shall never forget the pleasure with which I read Hawthorne's "Marble Faun" in Rome, various chapters from "Don Quixote" in Spain, and some of the stories from the "Arabian Nights" in the older quarters of Constantinople or while floating in a boat along the Nile. I felt the same sort of pleasure in following the story, already familiar to me, of "The Collegians" in the city and suburbs of Limerick. That is a true saying of the great German, that they who the poet would understand must wander through the poet's land, and the saying applies to the poets in prose as well as to the poets in verse and metre.

During our holiday wanderings we made many passing visits to Dublin. On one occasion our English travelling companion had the opportunity of seeing with us a very interesting and impressive public ceremonial. The occasion was that on which the freedom of the city was presented by the corporation to Parnell and John Dillon. The presentation took place in the Mansion House, and during part of the ceremonial the recipients of this honour had to stand side by side on a public platform in sight of the whole audience while the address of presentation was read aloud to them. Now it is hardly possible to imagine any ordeal

more difficult for a public man to go through in the peaceful ways of civilised life than to have thus to stand erect and motionless, an object on which all the spectators are sure to fix their gaze. while a long address to him is read aloud. John Dillon I should think must have found the ordeal especially trying. His unusually tall form and slender frame made the posture of motionless erectness one peculiarly adapted to try the nerves, and Dillon is by nature a modest man, who has little taste for becoming a central figure in any manner of public ceremonial. He got through it remarkably well, although those of us who knew him best could easily read in his face and even in his figure some suggestion of how he must have wished for the conclusion of this part of the performance. But we were all compelled to wonder at the manner in which Parnell adapted himself to the demands of the occasion. We all knew what a keen disrelish he had for being staged to the show in so conspicuous a position, and what efforts he was continually making to escape from bearing a prominent part in political pageantry of any kind. But on this occasion he appears to have risen to what I may call the pictorial needs of the hour, and he stood as immovable as a marble statue. During the reading of the whole address he maintained the same position, erect, calm, and graceful, never moving a limb, never showing the slightest evidence of nervousness, and yet not

seeming like one who forces himself by mere strength of will to go unshrinking through a trying ordeal, not like one compelling himself to act out a prepared part, but with all the pleasing composure of a man to whom an artistic posture in front of a crowd is the result of lifelong training. I have seen a great many public ceremonials, and have been present on various occasions when statesmen or soldiers or explorers or artists had to stand in front of a huge crowd and remain erect and silent while long addresses were being read out to them, and I must say that I never saw any other man who bore himself during such a trial with the same statuesque composure as that which Parnell maintained on that memorable occasion.

We received much hospitality in Dublin, during our visits, from the civic functionaries and from political and private friends, and we had more invitations to dinner parties and receptions than we could possibly have accepted, even if our days were to be much longer in the land of the shamrock. I am afraid that on one or two occasions we caused some disturbance to the minds of other tourists who happened to have rooms in the same hotel as we. This hotel had never, up to that date, been associated with the advanced National party, or indeed with any especially Irish party of whatever kind. It was visited for the most part by tourists from England and Scotland, and its owners and managers went in rather for welcoming

what may be called society visitors, and would by no means have cared to be looked upon as identified with any manner of popular demonstration. It was, in fact, a particularly genteel hotel in the modern sense of that word, and it was only because of our desire to be in the most convenient position for studying the great street ceremonials that we had selected this hostelry as our temporary home. We did not hesitate, however, to adorn the windows of our sitting-room by a display of green flags and other such proclamations of our sympathy and identification with the popular and the national cause. The managers of the hotel, I am bound to say, made a futile protest against our thus identifying some of their windows with the memory of O'Connell and the political principles of Parnell, and I believe that they were well pleased when the public processions came to an end, and there was no longer any occasion for the proclamation that we, Mabel Robinson included, were Paddies evermore, and were determined, according to the words of the famous national song, to back the Green against the Orange and to raise it o'er the Blue. I do not suppose that much regret was felt by the other occupants of the hotel or by its managers when, soon after the public celebrations, we took ourselves off to other parts of Ireland.

I have always looked back to that holiday spent in my native country as one of the bright chapters

of my life. It was the first holiday, mere genuine holiday, that I have thus far had in Ireland. Of course I visited Ireland times without number afterwards; but my visits with one exception were always on political business, taking part in county meetings or in contested elections, addressing great gatherings in the hall of the Rotunda in Dublin, and stirring up constituencies to prepare for some great coming struggle. Only a short time had to pass before my political colleagues suggested and urged that my son, Justin Huntley McCarthy, should come forward as a candidate for a seat in the House of Commons as representative of an Irish constituency. He was perfectly willing and I was perfectly willing, and when a vacancy arose in the borough of Athlone he was elected unopposed as its representative. Thus the whole male strength of my immediate family was engaged in the service of Parnell and his party. My son continued to be a member of the Parliamentary party for several years, and only retired at last because the steadily growing strength of the Irish cause and the improvements effected in the franchise by more recent legislation had given us a secure possession of all but a comparatively few among the Irish constituencies, and it was therefore no longer necessary for him to withdraw himself from that literary and dramatic career in which he was already beginning to make his way. I may say, however, that his sympathies

with the Irish national cause remain just as warm and earnest now as they were during the days when he became the representative of an Irish constituency. I am going a little in advance of my record for the purpose of showing that when I spoke of my last holiday in Ireland, I did not mean to convey the impression that my most cherished associations with Ireland were those of a holiday-maker enjoying an idle trip. But that visit was pure holiday of the brightest kind, enjoyed on congenial soil and in congenial companionship.

CHAPTER XVII

SOUTH, NORTH, AND WEST

During the autumn of the year following that in which I had my holiday in Ireland, I went with my son and daughter to carry out a long-contemplated visit to Spain. This was our first time of crossing the Pyrenees, and we were all intensely anxious to look upon some of the scenes which are especially endeared to the readers of books in every land by the adventures of Don Quixote. Disraeli, in one of his novels, has spoken of the strange thrill of delight felt by a traveller from some northern country when for the first time he sees a palm tree growing on its native soil. I think one experiences a feeling equally peculiar and equally delightful when, coming from some other country into Spain, he sees for the first time a windmill flourishing its arms over the soil where the Knight of La Mancha began his battle with the giants. Spain has so many historical, poetical, and romantic associations of the most splendid order that it seems like a sort of slight to her to speak of the windmills and Don Quixote as if they were her most characteristic charms for the foreign visitor. But for myself and my travelling

companions I can say that the thought of Don Quixote was more with us when entering on Spanish ground than any of the memories belonging to the Escurial or even Alhambra itself.

From Biarritz we crossed the Pyrenees into Spain, and our first halting-place for a few days was found in Burgos. It came as a surprise to me that Spain should have looked such an extremely strange and new land to my eyes, although I had seen much of southern France. Passing from France into Spain was like passing from picturesque prose into old-world poetry. None of our party could speak Spanish, although some of us could make a fair effort at translation from a Spanish book or from an article in a Spanish newspaper, so in the large cities we found it convenient to engage the services of an interpreter. I am not sure that this did not give a fresh charm to our travels, because it made them seem more like wandering in some strange and mysterious land where English or French or German would have been of little use, and where we seemed to be among the regions of old romance. Once on a railway journey we were thrown into companionship with two Spanish priests who were going our way. These kindly priests soon observed the interest which we took in every scene and spot as we rolled along, and were most anxious to call our attention to any points of historical or other attraction that we passed. They, however, did not speak English

or even French, and my efforts at Spanish were not such as to solve the difficulty. I suddenly bethought me of the fact that priests of the Catholic Church can always be relied upon to speak Latin, and I drew upon the somewhat failing stock of my early studies in order to find a medium of conversation. The good priests were delighted to have even this approach to an interchange of ideas, but here again a new difficulty arose. Their pronunciation of Latin did not by any means come into kinship with mine, which, although it had begun at Mr. Goulding's school with something like the Italian pronunciation, had since by long residence in England grown to be in tone with that peculiar style diffused among English students by the University of Oxford. I am afraid, therefore, that our intercommunication was somewhat slow and premeditated, and involved a bewildering amount of repetition. Still my friends were able to give me some new ideas, and to arouse my interest in scenes and objects which we might otherwise have passed over without notice. There was to me something bordering on the romantic and poetic in thus trying to converse in Latin with two Spanish ecclesiastics as we travelled through Spain, and the mere fact seemed to add a new charm to the day's journey.

The difficulty of keeping up the conversation, and the casual misunderstandings which now and then occurred, reminded me of another conversa-

tion I had had under very different conditions and on a different subject with a Hungarian visitor to London. At the time when the House of Commons was discussing a measure for the improvement of the Irish land tenure system, this Hungarian gentleman came to me with a letter of introduction from an English friend. The main object of his visit was his desire to be made acquainted with the bearings of the measure and the condition of things it was intended to remedy. The Hungarian spoke no English, and I need not blush to acknowledge that I could not discourse in the language of Hungary, so we had to carry on our talk in French. That would have been trying enough to me even under ordinary conditions, because I am not proud of my French accent and have no opinion of my skill in speaking any foreign language, even French. But I have always felt more at ease when talking French with one who is not a native of France than with a born and cultured Frenchman. I should have retained my self-respect when speaking with my Hungarian visitor, because I could give myself the comforting assurance that his French was perhaps not very much better than mine. There came, however, the difficulty of explaining all the terms of the Irish Land Bill, all its technicalities, and the practical conditions of the land to which the measure was to apply, in a language not my own. I should have found it not an easy task to

explain all the clauses of the Bill to an Englishman not acquainted with the subject, and the reader can easily understand what a task it was to make my explanation clear in French. One point of especial difficulty made an unfading impression on my memory. My Hungarian visitor told me there was one condition belonging to the agreements between landlords and tenants as to the meaning of which he could form no conjecture. A certain phrase had been written down for him in English, and he had tried to translate it into French, but even when he had done so as well as he could, with the help of a dictionary, he still could put no meaning to it, and he had unluckily lost the sheet of paper on which the English words were written. This phrase he had rendered into French as "l'orage pendant," and he told me he could not make even a guess as to what the words might mean in the arrangements between an Irish landlord and his tenant. I was for a moment utterly bewildered, and kept murmuring the words to myself again and again in the hope of finding out their mystic meaning. Suddenly a light flashed upon me. "L'orage pendant" meant "the hanging gale" — a term with which most of my Irish readers may even still be familiar, and which meant, in the time of their active application, that portion of a term's rent which was allowed by the landlord to hang over, that is, to remain unpaid until the end of the

following quarter. That difficulty at least was promptly smoothed away, and I hope that my Hungarian visitor was not compelled to leave the House without gaining some insight into the conditions of that very complicated subject, the question of Irish land tenure and its much-needed reforms.

This passing allusion to the Irish land question may come with a certain appropriateness into this short account of my visit to Spain. The Irish land question not merely followed me into Spain, but actually brought me back again before my projected time of travel was out. We were making our way steadily towards the south, and were already glowing with enthusiasm at the prospect of our approaching visit to Granada and the historic glories of Alhambra. Suddenly I received a number of urgent letters from colleagues and constituents advising me that some great meetings were to be held in Ireland, and especially in my own constituency, for the purpose of considering and deciding upon the course the Irish party ought to take with regard to the land question and the land measures in the session of Parliament which had been convened for the coming winter. I hope I do not want to exaggerate my claims to the character of a self-sacrificing patriot, but I think it will be admitted that to rush from Spain without seeing Granada was an act entitled at least to the reward of some internal self-com-

mendation. I felt, however, that it would hardly become a member of the Irish Nationalist party to keep on revelling in the enjoyment of a Spanish tour while his countrymen and his own constituents needed the help of every one who had pledged himself to the support and responsibility of our common cause. We turned our faces northward, made our way through Spain and France to London, and were in good time for me to take part in the councils of my colleagues and in the meetings of my Longford constituents. We consoled ourselves on our way homeward by the assurance that, after all, our visit to Alhambra was only postponed for a while, and that before long we should find an opportunity of studying at leisure the wonders of those Moorish memorials which we had not been allowed to see during our first visit to Spain. Thus far, at least, our beguiling anticipations have not been realised. Many a year is in its grave since that first visit to Spain, and I have never yet had time or opportunity to repeat my visit. "Farewell, my Spain, a last farewell," cries Byron's hero, — "perchance I may revisit thee no more." In my own case, I am rather inclined to put it the other way, and to say, "perchance I may revisit thee once more." But whether that hopeful possibility comes to pass or not, I felt that I was as much bound to hasten back to my Irish meetings, even though I left Granada unseen, as a soldier is bound to return to his post

when the time comes for him to fall into the ranks once more.

On our way home from Spain we made a short stay at Avignon, partly for the sake of looking on the Petrarch country, and partly with the wish to lay memorial flowers on the grave of John Stuart Mill. I have already told my readers that I owed my first encouragement to literary work, since my settling in London, to the generous appreciation of Mill, and I had always found him a kindly friend, and was an enthusiastic admirer of the services which he had rendered to many a great cause. It was but natural, therefore, that my son and daughter and I should go a little out of our way to pay our homage to his tomb. Mill had been in the habit during his later years of spending some part of every winter at Avignon, and it was there that the wife whom he so fondly loved died and was buried, and there still later he was laid by her side. It was in no spirit of mere formal hero-worship that we went through the ceremonial of laying flowers during our stay at Avignon on the grave of this great thinker who had been the friend of Ireland, and had understood her claims and her cause at a time when she had but few friends among eminent Englishmen.

That bright holiday tour in Spain was the last of my holiday trips. I have made some long journeys since that time, but they had to do with political work or with lecture tours, and I have made

visits to health resorts, enjoined by medical order and by the need of rest, but my latest holiday tour so far was that delightful visit to Spain.

Then set in the old life of struggle in the House of Commons, and the old endeavour to combine my literary work and my writing of leading articles with a steady attention to the exacting business of politics. I shall not attempt an historical survey of the progress made by the Irish movement inside and outside the walls of Westminster Palace, and shall still regard this book of mine as a personal narrative and not as either political or historical. After years of agitation out of doors and obstruction in the House of Commons, the Irish National party began to be recognised as a genuine political power, and the Irish cause forced itself on the attention and study of statesmen and others who up to this time had been inclined to regard it as a mere display of Irish turbulence and disaffection. Many leading English Liberals had been coming round to the belief that there must be something genuine in a national cause which could maintain itself in spite of so many difficulties and disasters. We could all see that Mr. Gladstone had long been coming round to this view of the crisis. An administration presided over by Lord Salisbury was turned out of office in the autumn of 1885 in great measure by the help of the strong vote which Parnell and his party were able to give to the Liberal side at a critical division.

The General Election of 1885 brought about an interesting event in my political life. The Irish National party had long been anxious for a favourable opportunity to contest some of the more important of the constituencies in Ulster. That northern province had been thus far regarded as the stronghold, in Ireland, of the Tory party and the Orangemen. The city of Derry had won quite a fame for itself as a Tory and Orange constituency. Of late years, however, there had been a gradual but marked increase in the number of Derry electors who were resolute Home Rulers. Parnell and his colleagues felt that the time had come when we ought to make a fight for the representation of Derry, Belfast, and other northern towns, and it was agreed that I should be the candidate chosen to contest Derry, — a decision which filled me with much gratification, not altogether unqualified by anxiety as to the result of the enterprise. I remember that my friend Thomas Sexton cheered me up by telling me that to win Derry would be to wear the blue ribbon of the Irish National party. Derry is a picturesque city alike in itself, in its surroundings, and in its historical associations. It is girt by famous walls somewhat like those of Chester, and the visitor can thus enjoy a delightful promenade of inspection. The anniversaries celebrated by the Orangemen on the one side of political life and the Nationalists on the other were always looked forward to as certain

to be the occasion of rival demonstrations by no means limited to oral expressions of sentiment. When I got to Derry I found myself surrounded by a large party of supporters, and it was soon apparent to me that the organisation of the Irish National party there was strong and well managed, and that there was the certainty that we should at least make a good fight at the forthcoming election, and that, although we were not likely to win, we should give our antagonists hard work to do in the gaining of their victory. Derry was a very busy place during that contest. The streets were paraded frequently by processions with bands and banners, and the great danger was that a National procession might come into collision with an Orange procession, and that a fierce fight would be the result. I am glad to say that not much harm of this kind came to pass, but there was one day when a great disturbance seemed imminent, and for a short time appeared actually inevitable. My son, who had joined us after his election for Newry, my daughter, and I were witnesses of the threatened encounter as we stood at the windows of the hotel where we were staying. An Orange procession with band and banners was coming into the principal street from one direction, and there were heard the sounds of a Nationalist procession coming to the same street from an opposite quarter. The intermediate space in the street was promptly occupied by a body of infantry with

fixed bayonets, and the soldiers were so arrayed as to face the Nationalist procession when it should make its appearance. This it did even sooner than was expected, and for the moment it seemed all but certain that the Nationalists would hold their way until encountered by a bayonet charge from the soldiers. Then we saw a Catholic priest break through the crowd of spectators, rush in between the infantry and the advancing Nationalists at the utter peril of his life, and with words and gestures now imploring, now commanding, endeavour to compel his fellow-religionists and fellow-Irishmen to fall back in peace. That was, indeed, a moment of intense and agonising uncertainty. Happily the brave priest succeeded in his gallant effort, the National procession halted in its march while the Riot Act was read, and the scene came to an end without the shedding of one drop of blood. I am glad to be able to say that only on that occasion did I see in my political campaigning in Derry city anything which seemed to threaten a really formidable and calamitous disturbance of the public peace. There were many passing quarrels and many loud-voiced threats, there were many demonstrations of hostile and combative feeling, but except for this incident I saw nothing that exceeded in violence the sights which might have been looked upon in those days at any ordinary English election. My daughter and I walked very often round the walls

of Derry and in the streets of Derry during that exciting time. We must have been well known to most of the Orangemen who crowded the streets, but on no occasion was there any demonstration of personal rudeness made towards us. The feeling among the Orangemen was, however, intensely strong, and it was manifested in one instance to no less a person than the distinguished Protestant Bishop of Derry, Dr. Alexander. The Bishop was a man of high culture, a distinguished scholar and author, and being Protestant Bishop of Derry, he was not much in sympathy with the cause of the Irish Nationalists. But he was a most kindly and hospitable gentleman, and saw no reason, I suppose, to display personal hostility towards me, whom, perhaps, as an author by profession he regarded with a certain interest. At all events, my daughter and I received a kindly invitation to dinner at the Bishop's palace in Derry, and we were entertained there in the most friendly manner. The fact, however, that a Home Ruler and a Catholic had been invited to Dr. Alexander's house soon got known in the town, and on the following morning it was discovered that the front of the palace had been bedaubed with the word "Ichabod" in many places.

My first contest in Derry had the result which most of us had fully anticipated. I was defeated by a majority of 29, but that majority was so small as not only to justify our enterprise, but to give

us the fullest hopes that we should have better luck next time. I made it known before leaving the historic city that I fully intended to try my chance another time and with every hope of being then successful. I cannot help saying with a pardonable feeling of gratified pride that the friendly crowd which accompanied me to the railway station was the most tumultuous and, for me, the most exciting demonstration I had seen since my recent entrance into Derry. It was with no little difficulty and no slight exertion on the part of the protecting friends who accompanied me that I was at last enabled to make my way to the platform through the cheering, hand-shaking, enthusiastic throng who surrounded me, proclaiming their encouraging wishes for my speedy return to contest another election. It will be convenient for me to anticipate a little the story of my connection with Derry city, by telling my readers that in the year immediately following we had another election owing to the resignation of the Liberal Ministry on the defeat of Gladstone's Home Rule measure, and I redeemed my promise by returning to Derry as the Nationalist candidate. In this latter attempt I carried with me a larger number of votes than at the former election. I was defeated, indeed, at the polling, but only by a majority of three, and my Derry friends were convinced that some of the votes obtained on this occasion by my opponent would not stand the test of a legal

scrutiny. I presented a petition according to the usual form, claimed the seat as my own by right, and demanded an inquiry. The election petition went through the usual course, and it was found upon a scrutiny that certain of the votes on the other side could not be accepted, and that I had been elected by a small majority. I had, in the mean time, started on my American tour, and it was in the capital of New Brunswick that I received the gladdening news that I was the Nationalist member of Derry city. I had the honour of representing Derry for some years in the House of Commons. My Longford constituents had behaved to me in the most generous manner. During the General Election of 1885 I was reëlected for Longford, so that my defeat in Derry left me still the representative of an Irish constituency. When I stood a second time for Derry in 1886, my Longford friends once again generously chose me as their representative, and it was left to me to choose which of the two I should represent. I chose Derry, for the obvious reason that the Longford seat was always safe for a Nationalist candidate, while my retaining the Derry seat would give the National party an additional vote in the House of Commons. Some years later I stood for Derry a third time and was then defeated, but again my Longford friends came to my assistance and reëlected me. Thus I merely ceased to be member for Derry in order to become once again

member for North Longford, which I continued to be until the close of my Parliamentary career.

Gladstone came into office, and soon introduced his first Irish Home Rule measure. The measure was not all that we, the Irish Nationalists, could have desired, but it was emphatically a step in the right direction, and we gladly welcomed it, if only because it recognised the national claim to a separate Irish Parliament.

The measure was defeated in the House of Commons because of a sudden secession on the Liberal side of the House; a secession very much resembling that which had led to the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Reform measure of 1866. The secession of 1886 may be said to have had for its leader Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had been for many sessions regarded by Parnell and the Irish National members as a thorough sympathiser with the Irish cause and the demand for Home Rule. Those of us who knew him personally had always understood him to be our confidential friend and political ally, and I well remember on that terrible Sunday when the news of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, reached London, how Parnell and I went at once to call on Mr. Chamberlain, to consult him as to the best steps which the Irish party ought to take to repudiate in the most effective manner on behalf of Ireland any national sympathy with that utterly detestable crime. The

secession against the Home Rule Bill proved too strong for the Liberal administration ; the Bill was defeated, Gladstone went out of office, a General Election took place, and Lord Salisbury came back to power at the head of a great majority.

We had much to do in Ireland during all this time of political confusion, but we succeeded in keeping the country perfectly quiet and orderly, notwithstanding the terrible shock of surprise and disappointment which had been brought upon it by the Liberal secession and its immediate effect. The shock was all the more distressing for the Irish National party, because it had always been our great effort to prove to Irishmen at home and abroad that the great legislative reform we were endeavouring to bring about could be accomplished by constitutional agitation. One of our chief difficulties consisted in the fact that the more extreme representatives of the Irish national cause on this side of the Atlantic and on the other were convinced that nothing was to be got but disappointment and failure from any constitutional and peaceful agitation. There were many Irishmen in the United States and Canada, thoroughly sincere and patriotic, who had no faith in any English party, would not trust the Liberals any more than the Conservatives, and were always telling their countrymen and the world generally that nothing could be done for the Irish cause except by means of an armed rebellion. I am not now speaking

of men who could have felt any sympathy with the shooting of landlords, or with political assassination or mere wanton disturbance of any kind, but of sincere and intelligent men, who had especial influence over Irish-Americans and were convinced that Parnell and his party were wasting the energies and resources of their people on a futile effort. We knew that the defection of so many prominent Liberals from the policy of Mr. Gladstone would give a new and strong influence to the men of whom I am speaking, and would make their words sound only too convincing when they told their countrymen that Parliamentary agitation was foredoomed to utter failure. We were therefore most anxious that everything in our power should be done at once to prevent the growth of such a disastrous conviction among Irishmen at home and Irishmen in the United States and Canada.

One of the arrangements made by Parnell and those with whom he took counsel was that I should go out to the American continent and carry to our countrymen there the message of the Irish National party, enjoining patience, hope, and full confidence in the ultimate and not very far distant triumph of our constitutional movement. I had intended in any case to make another lecturing tour in the United States, and I was proud indeed to carry the message of our Nationalist Parliamentary party to our countrymen across the

Atlantic and to the American public in general. My colleagues gave me a "send-off" in form of a farewell dinner in a restaurant in London. Parnell presided, and most of the Irish members then in town were present, and some ladies were guests, my daughter among the rest. I received many encouraging words and good wishes on my approaching expedition, as the accredited envoy of the Irish Parliamentary party, and therefore of the Irish people. I remember in especial the words which were spoken by Parnell himself, John Dillon, T. P. O'Connor, Thomas Sexton, and many others who were entitled to be regarded as leading influences in the Irish National movement. So I started for the United States from Liverpool in the early September of 1886, and I well remember that my friend T. P. O'Connor came to Liverpool to see me off, and presented me with an elegant and commodious deck chair to be one of my comforts in crossing the Atlantic.

The voyage to New York was made especially agreeable to me because it so happened that my friends Mr. and Mrs. Campbell-Praed were going to the United States by the same steamer, and there were no English friends of mine with whom I had been on terms of more close and genial companionship. Campbell-Praed died prematurely but a short time ago, and Mrs. Campbell-Praed, with whom I worked in literary collaboration for the production of more than one novel, still con-

tinues to increase her reputation as the authoress of books which receive the welcome and admiration of the reading public. Neither of my companions on this Atlantic voyage was in the least disturbed by any dread of sea-sickness, although it was in the season of the equinoxes, for both of them had crossed and recrossed broader seas than the Atlantic. So we had a very enjoyable time of it, although the winds sometimes blew their shrillest, and the waves pitched our steamer about as if she were a plaything to be tossed into the air. We accomplished our voyage in good time, and on this my third visit to America I found myself welcomed on the landing-stage at New York by deputations of my countrymen as the envoy of our nation. So foreseeing and resolute were they in their preparations for my reception, that they had made arrangements beforehand for passing through my luggage with the slightest possible examination at the custom house. Those who are acquainted with the ways of the custom house at New York will admit that I had every reason to feel grateful for this smoothing of my path. Indeed, when my welcoming countrymen found that I had two friends in my company, they contrived to have the same obliging courtesy extended to Mr. and Mrs. Praed, so that my two fellow-travellers, utterly innocent of any share in a political mission, were exempted as well as I was from any minute inspection of their trunks and boxes. My

friend Campbell-Praed, although a stanch Conservative in politics, so far as he was concerned about politics at all, was thus enabled to share some of the advantages of a representative of the Irish national cause and of the Parliamentary party, which, in the opinion of many highly respectable Englishmen just then, had for its object the utter overthrow of the British Constitution and even the foundations of Britain's Imperial power.

My countrymen in New York had secured for me a fine suite of rooms in the Hoffman House, which then seemed farther up-town than it does at present, and they found there also rooms for Mr. and Mrs. Praed. I received many deputations during the opening days of my visit, and was entertained at a banquet given to me in the Hoffman House by some of my countrymen, at which many leading Americans who sympathised with the cause of Home Rule took a prominent part. One of the most brilliant of the Irish "rebels" of 1848, Richard O'Gorman, who had divided with Thomas Francis Meagher the honours of eloquence during the Forty-Eight movement, was at the banquet, and delivered a speech which must have won the applause of even the most critical audience for its splendid oratorical power, beauty, and intonation. There, too, I heard for the first time a speech from that master of after-dinner eloquence, wit, and humour, Mr. Chauncey Depew, whom I have heard many times since that evening, and who always

impressed me more and more by the charm of his fancy and his style. Another of the American speakers was Whitelaw Reid, whom I had known well during my former visits to the United States, who had now succeeded Horace Greeley, the editor of the New York "Tribune." There were many distinguished American clergymen and public men of various orders present, and all of them who took any part in the speaking expressed the warmest and most generous sympathy with the Irish national cause and the fullest confidence in the purposes and policy of the Irish National party. I had most assuredly every reason to feel fully gratified by the reception given to me as the representative of Ireland's claims, and I felt that if ever a man had begun a political mission under entirely encouraging auspices, I might regard myself as thus commissioned to go on energetically with my work.

The actual business of my mission began at a great meeting held in the Academy of Music, which was crowded to excess, and of course for the most part by sympathetic country people of my own. There was, however, a large proportion of Americans present, and some leaders of important political parties took their places on my platform. I had nothing more to do than to explain the object of my mission, and to make it clear that the Irish Parliamentary party and the Irish people were claiming nothing but their rightful share of

political independence, and that without the restoration of Ireland's National Parliament it would be utterly impossible that Ireland could prosper even so far as the mere material conditions of prosperity were concerned. The task was simple and straightforward, and the audience seemed to be thoroughly responsive. The meeting was well reported next day in the New York papers, and I could not have opened my speech-making tour under more promising conditions.

On that tour I do not ask my readers to follow me. I have no intention of offering to them a detailed account of my journeyings up and down the United States and through a great part of Canada. I held meetings and delivered speeches in most of the great cities and towns of the United States, and in the principal cities and towns of Canada. I gave occasional lectures here and there on some merely literary subjects, but for by far the greater part of my time on the American continent I acted as the spokesman of the Irish Parliamentary party and the Irish national cause. Many changes had come to pass among those whom I had known during my former visits to the American continent. My brother Frank was dead and his children had grown up. His widow, a woman of many intellectual gifts and endowed with a sympathetic nature, was still making her way as a writer of bright and attractive stories. I saw much of her and her sons and daughter

during my stay, for I had many return visits to New York, and she accompanied me on some of my journeys, one to Chicago among the number. Many of my old friends in Boston had left this life during the years that had intervened since my former American experiences. Emerson had died, and Longfellow, and others of that brilliant literary set which made Boston famous. Oliver Wendell Holmes was still living, and I saw him for the last time. On the other hand, I made some new friends, one of whom was the brilliant Irish author, poet, and orator, John Boyle O'Reilly, with whom I formed a strong and genuine friendship which lasted through the remainder of his life and is always with me as a memory. Another friend whom I met for the first time during that period was Edward Blake, then a leading and most distinguished member of the Canadian Parliament, and now a leading and distinguished member of the Irish Parliamentary party in the House of Commons. I shall have to speak later on of the noble sacrifice Edward Blake afterwards made when, as a patriotic son of Ireland, he gave up his splendid position in the Dominion of Canada to help us during a great national crisis by becoming a member of the Irish party in the House of Commons. For the present I need only say that his kindness and hospitality in Canada must always be remembered by me with pleasure and gratefulness, and made the beginning of a last-

ing friendship. The whole lecturing tour occupied many months, and when it was drawing to a close my daughter came out to meet me, was received by the family of my late friend Cyrus W. Field in their New York home, and then joined me in Washington, where I had to address several meetings. We went from there to Boston, where we made some stay, and there my daughter met Oliver Wendell Holmes for the last time. We spent some days in New York, which we occupied chiefly in visiting my sister-in-law and her sons and daughter, and I may say that it was then I saw for the first time the brilliant American actress, Ada Rehan. Our last evening in New York was spent in Daly's theatre, where she was performing with unsurpassed artistic brilliancy and power Katherine in the "Taming of the Shrew" to John Drew's admirable Petruchio. I do not know that I could have found a more delightful way of occupying my last evening in the great city. I had every reason to be satisfied with the results of my speech-making expedition. I believe that I was able to render some service to the National movement, if only because it was well known to the American public that it was not my interest in any worldly sense to have identified myself with the advocacy of Home Rule. I look back on that episode of my life with the feeling that the time was well spent.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PARNELL COMMISSION

When I returned to my life in London, I found the Irish question still occupying as much as ever the attention of the House of Commons. The Conservative Government was giving itself up mainly to the introduction of yet more stringent criminal laws for the suppression of agrarian and political agitation in Ireland, and Mr. Gladstone and the leading Liberals — the Liberals who still accepted him as their chief — were joining with the Irish members in resisting this policy. There was a certain novelty in the situation for one who, like myself, had been absent for many months from Westminster. The Liberals were once again in cordial alliance with the Irish Nationalists, and the cordiality of their alliance was not merely political but social. For some time after Parnell's rise to power, it seemed to be taken for granted in English society that a Parnellite member of the House of Commons must be an enemy to all British law and order, and in fact a sort of social outcast, whom no respectable British citizen could possibly receive inside his doors as a guest.

I may say that from the very beginning the

English working-classes seemed to me, on the whole, to have clearly and thoroughly understood the character and the purposes of the Irish Nationalist party. Even those English workingmen who had no personal acquaintance with the actual condition of things in Ireland found it probably quite easy to understand that the toilers on the soil of Ireland might have been subjected to the domination of a ruling class which kept them down as mere serfs, working all day long for a bare living and treated with a scorn which made oppression still more bitter. English workingmen had no difficulty in understanding how the land question and the political question became parts of the same national cause in Ireland, and how the Irish representatives who insisted that Parliament must be compelled, if necessary by obstruction, to listen to the story of Irish grievances might be regarded as the friends and not the enemies of England's best interests. We were always on cordial terms with the representatives of labour in England, and from such men as John Burns, for instance, we received nothing but sympathy and the most steady support. But it was quite otherwise for a long time with the classes who represent society in England, even where many of their leading men were in favour of reform in the Irish land tenure system and had come to recognise the case made out for Home Rule. Our obstructive tactics in Parliament had given the impression to most of

these men that the Irish National representatives were merely a band of agitators who loved to disturb the House of Commons, partly for the fun of the thing, and partly to demonstrate their hatred of England. There had come about, since Mr. Gladstone had adopted the Home Rule claim, a complete change in the bearing of the English Liberals, and they offered their cordial welcome to the Irish National representatives. Some of our party never responded to the change in Liberal sentiment. Parnell himself never cared much for general society. He liked the companionship of his personal friends, and used to give very pleasant little dinner parties to them and to accept their hospitality. But he was hardly ever to be seen at any of the English houses where Irish representatives were now to be met. Some others of our party still resented the feeling which had once been displayed towards them by the English Liberals, and declined now to accept a welcome which would not have been offered to them two or three years before. Most of us, however, saw in the changed conditions a fresh hope that Englishmen were beginning to understand the real claims and the justice of the Irish cause, and that a day was coming when Irishmen and Englishmen might be fellow-workers for the true interests, and therefore the common interests, of Great Britain and Ireland alike. There were some bearers of historic and illustrious English names who

had from the first given their sympathy to our cause, and had seen that the Irish representatives were patriotic and self-sacrificing men. I may mention the names of the late Countess Russell and her daughter, Lady Agatha Russell, as among those of our very earliest friends in England. Lady Russell was the widow of Earl Russell, famous in modern history as Lord John Russell, and she had always understood the Home Rule question and appreciated the purposes and the motives of those who represented it. There were Englishmen like Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Henry Labouchere, who, during the whole of our obstructive movements, used to go with us into our division lobbies, utterly indifferent to what might be said of them in most of the English newspapers. They were drawn to our side by their belief that we had a genuine cause to sustain, and that obstruction was just then our only means of compelling the House of Commons to give any attention to the pleadings of that cause. Until lately, indeed, we had regarded Mr. Joseph Chamberlain as one of our most resolute English allies, but with the introduction of Gladstone's Home Rule measure we had found ourselves compelled to regard him in quite a different light. It was evident to me when I returned from my American tour that a new chapter had opened in the history of the Home Rule movement, and that an Irish National member was henceforward to be a welcome as-

sociate in the great progressive work of English politics.

The House of Commons continued to make the same exactions as before on the time of those who belonged to the Irish National party. For session after session the House was mainly occupied with Irish affairs, and for the most part — indeed until quite recently — with measures for imposing further coercion on Ireland and devising new penalties against Irish agitation. For some time, however, we had had most of the English Liberal members working on our side and helping us to resist this policy of subjugation. The responsibility of keeping the debates going rested chiefly on the Parnellite members, and although we now showed ourselves a very considerable number, we could not venture to leave the House during any part of a night's sitting. English, Scotch, and Welsh members of whatever party could easily arrange for pairs, and thus get free for a sitting, or for several sittings, and at any time for the greater part of a night's debate. We felt that the whole burden of the resistance to coercion rested on our shoulders, and we could not run the risk of allowing any of our colleagues to absent himself from the scene of struggle. An English member who was given to humorous sayings once asked an Irish Nationalist to pair with him for the rest of the sitting. "In our party we never pair" was the answer of the Irishman. "But," rejoined the Briton, "if you

never pair, how do you expect to increase the number of your party?" We never did pair in those days, but we did succeed in steadily increasing our numbers.

We dined in the House of Commons dining-rooms while the House was sitting, and there were some of us who made it a point to dine always at the same table. That little group generally consisted of John Dillon, Thomas Sexton, William O'Brien, T. P. O'Connor, Edward Leamy, Matthew Bodkin, myself, with occasionally an English friend or two who made part of our group. My colleagues were all well-read men and brilliant talkers, and each seemed to have his own particular vein of humour and wit. I do not know that I ever spent more delightful evenings than these, for all the turmoil of political strife that was going on, the incessant divisions which sometimes compelled us to leave the dinner table two or three times during the feast, and the occasional emergencies when one or another of us had to leave his dinner and hurry back to the House to take part in the debate. As the night wore on we often reassembled in one of the smoking-rooms, and there resumed our talk and our interchange of ideas. Neither at the dinner table nor in the smoking-room did the talk always or often concern itself with the political questions then engaging Parliamentary and public attention. We rather sought a relief in these social gatherings from political topics. We

talked of books and theatres, and also indulged in much pleasant "chaff" and encounters of humorous cut and thrust. During the ordinary sittings of the House we often left the building after the day had dawned, and in the summer months we sometimes walked to our homes under the bright sunlight. Some of the most delightful recollections of my life are associated with these frequent episodes in our exacting, anxious, and often very dreary work as representatives of the Irish national cause in the British House of Commons.

Soon came that new chapter in the history of the Irish Parliamentary movement which was opened for us by the publication of the famous Parnell forgeries in "The Times" newspaper. I do not intend to give here any description of this well-known and ghastly story; I shall only touch on some few points which came within my own observation. I never to my knowledge saw Richard Pigott, the man who concocted the forged letters, although in his evidence before the Special Commission he deposed that he had had one secret interview or more with me. I had received from him before the publication of the forgeries several letters begging that I would help him with money, as he represented himself to be in great distress. I had often heard of Pigott before I got any of those letters, but I had heard of him only as a man whom all reputable Irishmen distrusted and avoided. I showed Parnell some of the beg-

ging letters, and asked him whether Pigott was a man to whom the Irish party or any members of it ought to lend money, and Parnell strongly advised me not to allow myself to be drawn into any further correspondence with him; for, as he quaintly put it, you cannot touch pitch or Pigott without being defiled. The begging letters themselves were not calculated to arouse sympathy or to awaken charitable feelings, for they were extravagant and inconsistent in their pictures of his distress, and he did not always remember in his latest letter what he had described as the main cause of his honoured poverty in some former epistle. I ceased to reply to any of his appeals, and until the forgeries were published I thought but little about him. When the forgeries were published in "The Times,"— letters professing to be written and signed by Parnell, and implying a sort of sympathy with the Phœnix Park assassins, — I, like all the rest of my party, felt no more doubt as to their being mere forgeries than if they had been actually prepared under my eyes by some vulgar-minded jester as a passing joke. If any evidence as to their character were needed beyond their obvious absurdity, it must have been supplied by the bad spelling of the wretched forger; for we all knew that from Parnell's education and his precise ways of expressing himself it was impossible to suppose him capable of neglecting, in any haste, the laws of orthography. I have never been able to understand how men of

education and capacity such as the managers of a great London newspaper could ever have been taken in by so preposterous a piece of work as these letters. I came to know afterwards, on the most certain authority, that the forged letters had been shown to more than one member of the House of Commons before they were carried to "The Times" office, and that these members had at once declared them to be gross and palpable forgeries. It is certain that the editor and the manager of "The Times" must have been brought to believe that they were genuine documents and fully represented the secret purposes of Parnell. This is all the more strange seeing that the character of Pigott was thoroughly well known in Dublin, and that the bitterest Tory in that city would never have accepted any statement on his evidence alone. A Conservative member of Parliament, a thorough opponent of Parnell, told me that if an emissary from "The Times" had gone over to the Irish capital and asked the sentry at the gate of Dublin Castle, supposing he could have got into conversation with that personage on duty, what sort of a man was Richard Pigott, he must have received an answer which would have made him very cautious indeed about accepting anything on Pigott's testimony.

On the day when the letters appeared in "The Times," most of the Irish National members were in the House of Commons before the actual

sitting began, and were exchanging ideas as to the origin of the letters, and as to the effect they were likely to have on English public opinion. Up to that time we, most of us, were inclined to regard the whole matter as a sort of absurd practical joke, and we had not the least expectation that it could be taken seriously by any considerable proportion of educated persons. Every one who knew Parnell knew perfectly well how utterly opposed he was to acts of violence in the carrying out of the National policy, and how absolutely he condemned all such acts as destructive of its best hopes and interests. Our only doubt that day was as to whether we ought to take any notice of the whole affair in the House of Commons, and whether it would not be more dignified on the part of Parnell and his friends to pass over the publication of the letters with contemptuous silence. However, as the time for the sitting of the House drew near, we began to meet with more and more evidences that many English members still believed anything to be genuine which appeared in "The Times," and that the letters were already creating a profound sensation. It seemed to us at last that it would be necessary for Parnell to arise at question time during the coming sitting and denounce the letters as forgeries, and we were anxiously waiting for his coming to offer him our advice on that subject. It so happened that on that particular day he was late in coming to the House,

and had not appeared at the time when questions were drawing to a close, and when, according to the usual arrangements of business, the proper opportunity would come for a member to arise in his place and offer any personal statement he believed it necessary to make. There was no time to communicate with Parnell, and we felt that something must be done. It was hurriedly arranged among us that if Parnell should not come in time, Thomas Sexton must rise in the House at the proper moment and publicly stigmatise "The Times" letters as shameful forgeries. The moment came, and Sexton arose and made his statement in tones of generous indignation. It was while Sexton was actually making his statement that Parnell entered the House and took his seat on the bench just behind him. As Parnell was sitting down, he heard Sexton denounce the letters as gross and shameful forgeries, and he at once announced his acceptance of that declaration by calling out loudly "Hear, hear!" again and again. This was the first authoritative information we had received as to the origin of the letters, and I only mention the incident to show how little we needed our leader's personal assurance to convince us that he had nothing to do with their existence. Our feelings with regard to them were exactly the same as if "The Times" had declared that Parnell had been making a living by picking pockets, or that Parnell was not really Parnell, but an

anarchist assassin passing himself off as an Irish National leader. Parnell made his own statement in due course, and it was welcomed and cheered, I am glad to say, by many English and Scotch members on both sides of the House. I am glad to say that one Conservative member, a distinguished advocate and Queen's Counsel, said in the House, during the discussion, that from the moment when he read the letters in "The Times," he had regarded them as nothing but gross and monstrous forgeries. Many English and Scotch members came round to where Parnell was sitting and cordially shook hands with him, to show their belief in his honour and their sympathy with his feelings.

The publication of the forged letters was, as I have said, the opening of a new chapter in the history of the Irish National movement. Many leading Conservatives and even some Liberals were strongly of opinion that even though the published letters should be proved to be palpable forgeries, there was still justification enough for holding a public and official inquiry into the whole methods and working of the Parnell agitation. My readers have already a general knowledge of the course taken by the Government with the object of instituting such an inquiry, and I am not engaged in writing the history of those events, but am only describing the impression they made upon me and how far I was personally concerned

in them. A special commission was formed, by virtue of which three English judges were empowered to hold a full inquiry into the methods of the Irish National movement under the leadership of Parnell, and to summon any witnesses whose testimony they thought essential, and if necessary to enforce their attendance and compel them to divulge all they knew. To put the matter plainly and divest it of all legal technicalities, the Government decided, with the assent of Parliament, to put Parnell and his colleagues on trial as offenders against the public peace, and compel them to defend themselves against the charges contained in the indictment of "The Times" in the series of articles headed "Parnellism and Crime." The Commission was carried on in one of the regular Law Courts, and there was a brilliant array of counsel on either side. The leading counsel for Parnell and his colleagues was that great advocate and high-minded man, my late friend, Sir Charles Russell, afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen. Russell was an Irishman representing an Irish constituency in the House of Commons, but though thoroughly National in all his sympathies, he had never ranged himself under the leadership of Parnell.

I doubt whether, since the impeachment of Warren Hastings, there ever was a more important and absorbing political investigation carried on before an English tribunal. I am convinced that the great speech of Sir Charles Russell for the

defence of Parnell and his colleagues might have borne comparison with some of the great speeches of the men who arraigned the famous Proconsul of India. In the impeachment of Warren Hastings the especial interest lay in the speeches for the impeachment, while in the trial before the Parnell Commission the public interest was almost entirely absorbed in the speeches for the defence. The law officers of the Crown and the other learned counsel engaged with them had but little opportunity for the display of fervid eloquence when conducting the prosecution of the men arraigned before that tribunal. I remember thinking that their hearts did not seem to be very much in the work, which mainly consisted in the endeavour to make Parnell and his colleagues personally responsible for every violent deed done and every threatening word spoken during the past few years of the Irish National movement. Every wild speech of any Irish Nationalist at home or abroad seemed to be accepted by the Crown prosecutors, as I may call them, as spoken under the direct authority of Parnell, and therefore a distinct part of the cumulative evidence against him. Every attempt on the life of a landlord or one of his agents in counties which had been for generations the scene of a continued civil war between landlord and tenant was put forward as direct evidence connecting Parnellism with crime.

I could not help having a strong impression

that some of the learned advocates for the prosecution had but little respect for the sort of evidence which it became their duty to lay before the court in proof of the charges made against Parnell. Everybody who knew the real history of the Parnell agitation must have known that Parnell had from the beginning of his leadership set himself resolutely against every kind of violence, and that the heart and soul of his policy were guided by the firm belief that the Irish national cause could be carried to success by strictly constitutional action and with the House of Commons as the principal field of battle. Much of the evidence was purely historical in its character, and only went to show that ever since the passing of the Act of Union the great majority of the Irish people had been united in their demand for the restoration of Ireland's Parliament, and that during the same period there had been an intense struggle going on, a civil war in fact, between landlords and tenants in the agricultural districts of Ireland. The evidence was for this very reason full of public and historical interest, and it made out as clear a case as could be made for the intervention of the English Parliament to put an end to a state of things which had been denounced by Grattan, denounced by Daniel O'Connell, denounced by Isaac Butt, and denounced more lately by Parnell. The very same evidence, if an opportunity had arisen, might just as well have been given in

other days, in some instances had been given, to prove that Grattan and O'Connell and Butt were personally responsible for every act of violence and every incitement to rebellion which had taken place in any part of Ireland, and under no matter what circumstances, in the days when they were the leaders of the Irish national cause. But the interest deepened, and became more personal and acute, when the advocates for the Crown brought forward the various scraps of evidence which were intended to convict Parnell and some of his colleagues of direct incitement to crime or hiring the services of guilty men to do wicked deeds.

The inquiry lasted for a long time, and during the earlier months of its progress I attended the sittings of the court every day. To me the proceedings were intensely interesting, although I could never help thinking that there was an air of unreality about the whole business. I saw that many of my colleagues were, in all but strictly technical terms, put on their trial on the charge of having incited or hired the commission of deeds which I knew that they were just as little likely to commit, approve, or encourage as any of the three learned judges on the bench. The theory of the prosecution seemed to be that if any out of the hundreds and thousands of men in Ireland or in England who belonged to Home Rule or tenant right associations could be shown to have committed an act of violence, it must be inferred,

as a matter of course, that that particular act of violence was done under the authority and with the sanction of Parnell and Parnell's party. There were cases in which men who had for the time been employed by a branch of the Irish National organisation had afterwards been concerned in crime and had been brought to justice or escaped from the country, and the Crown lawyers seemed to argue that Parnell and his colleagues must be held responsible for their deeds.

I had in my own case at least one curious illustration of this new and extraordinary principle. I was at that time vice-chairman of the Irish Parliamentary party, of which Parnell was chairman, and I had in my charge the distribution of certain funds required for carrying on our political work. One man who had been employed for some time as secretary of a branch of our organisation was afterwards suspected of taking part in a criminal conspiracy, and I was called upon to explain how it was that I had ever supplied this man with funds. One of the charges made against us was that we were very careless in the keeping of our accounts. Much stress was laid upon any failure on our part to produce all books and documents required, and it seemed to be held that the accidental loss of any such book or paper must be, in itself, evidence of a deliberate design to frustrate the ends of justice. I produced my bank-book and showed that the payments made to this

man — payments merely for his travelling expenses — were all regularly recorded. It was pointed out to the court by our counsel that a member of Parliament who was paying men to commit legal offences would not be likely to make his payments through the medium of his ordinary cheque-books and to have them passed through the hands of his bankers. I believe I succeeded in making it clear to the court that I had not been concerned in hiring men to commit deeds of violence; at all events, no further steps were taken to bring me to condign punishment. But the curious fact on which I particularly wish to dwell was that when the proceedings were all over, it appeared that one of my bank-books had somehow been lost, and it was never recovered. I had handed them in to the officials of the court publicly, during the opening sitting, in presence of the judges, the lawyers on both sides, and the crowd of spectators. One of my bank-books was lost and could never be found, and yet one theory of the prosecution was that where any important document belonging to the Irish party was lost, or said to be lost, that was in itself evidence of some guilty purpose on the part of those who once had it in their possession. I thought it a remarkably amusing comment on this principle, that the Commission itself had publicly obtained possession of one of my bank-books and had lost it.

A large number of the Irish National members

were called as witnesses during the sittings of the Commission, and were required to explain what they had meant by this or that speech; when, where, and how often they had met this or that person, how they came to meet him, what he had said to them, and they had said to him. In my own case I was called upon to explain the nature of my dealings with all manner of Irish-Americans whom I had happened to meet once or twice at public assemblies during my late visit to the United States.

We were all in much the same position. No distinct charges were made against us, but each man was called as a witness, and was expected to answer any questions put to him by the Crown advocates or by the court as to any passage in his public or private life. "Let us see if we cannot find out something about this witness which will connect him with crime as well as with Parnellism," seemed to be the underlying idea of every examination. It was a question of inference altogether, but the inference sought to be deduced was always to the discredit of the witness under examination. I think that except when men like Parnell himself were in the witness box, the proceedings of a day's sitting must have seemed uninteresting and dull to the unconcerned listeners. But to those of us who might be said to be on trial, there was always a certain fascination in the business of the day. Some friend and comrade,

for instance, whom one had known intimately for years, and had always known to be a man of personal integrity and a high sense of honour, was closely examined by keen advocates, with the apparent object of compelling him to confess that he had become the conscious associate of outlaws and assassins. There was an irritating novelty about the whole performance which kept one's curiosity alive and active. During years of close association with Irish political life at times of great political and agrarian disturbance, it was hardly possible for an Irish National member of Parliament not to be brought now and then into casual intercourse with men who were afterwards convicted or at least accused of crimes. To hear such men as my habitual associates in the Irish Parliamentary party thus put metaphorically to the torture, in order that a full confession might be extorted as to their association with this, that, or the other person believed to be treasonable or otherwise criminal, was a very painful experience sometimes, but it could hardly be described as commonplace or uninteresting. We were all quite aware — I may speak for my colleagues as well as for myself — that we had planned nothing, had incited nothing, had done nothing, which could bring us within the reach of criminal law, and yet here we were, one after another, put in the witness box, to be probed by counsel as to when and how often we had met such and such a man, why we

had met him, what we had said to him and he to us, and so on through hour after hour of speculative cross-examination. I suppose the proceedings must have had some interest for unconcerned observers, because the court was crowded every day and there were always a large number of ladies present. There was, however, a growing feeling of satisfaction among all who sympathised with us and our cause in the fact that the whole mechanism of inquiry was able to bring out nothing which the world did not know well already — the fact that the Irish National movement under the leadership of Parnell was a constitutional and legal movement, intended for nothing but to bring about Home Rule and a reform in the system of agricultural tenure by peaceful and Parliamentary means.

One distinguished Englishman who attended the sittings of the court very regularly was George Meredith, then and now the foremost living English novelist. George Meredith, whom I have the honour of numbering among my friends, was in sympathy with the Irish national cause, and was acquainted with some of its leading representatives. He had not, indeed, so far as I know, expressed a preference for any particular form of Parliamentary agitation or scheme of reform in the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. But he was in sympathy with Ireland and recognised that there was an Irish national cause, and

he followed the work of the Commission Court with close attention and deep interest. He had obtained a seat close behind the benches occupied by the leading advocates on both sides; and when it became generally known among members of the bar that George Meredith was so near to them, his presence in the court excited an amount of interest among these legal gentlemen which was at once a credit to them and a well-merited tribute to him. Many distinguished men in no wise concerned with its actual business were to be seen now and then among the general audience, but they were for the most part men who had something to do with Parliament and politics. But the appearance of George Meredith, the philosophic, romantic, and poetic novelist, with his handsome, thoughtful face and his impressive bearing, always seemed to me like a gleam from the world of art into the prosaic chamber of legal, formal, and often very commonplace investigation. There were many periods of the inquiry when a thrilling interest which sometimes had a tragic note in it was given to the inquiry, as on the day when Richard Pigott was cross-examined by Sir Charles Russell. But in the ordinary course of things the work of each day was monotonous and uninteresting, and I cannot but think that the presence of George Meredith must have been to many visitors their best reward for a day spent in the Commission Court.

CHAPTER XIX

COMMITTEE ROOM FIFTEEN

The winter wore on, and the Special Commission dragged its slow length along. My attendance at the court was, however, interrupted by an interval of several weeks. My son, who had been suffering from ill health, received medical advice which enjoined him to spend the winter months in Algeria, and there he and my daughter had gone a few weeks before the time at which my story now arrives. I was left alone in our London house for the first time during a long term of years, and I cannot say that I enjoyed this life of domestic solitude. So I made up my mind to spend Christmas time and some few weeks more in Algiers, and I applied to the Crown advocates and the advocates for the defence to give me permission to leave England while the Commission was still going on. I found the Crown advocates quite as willing to grant me this permission as the advocates on my own side, and it was arranged that I should be set free from attendance at the court during the time for which I had asked. Evidently the advocates for the Crown did not believe that I was conscious of any heavy responsibility

to the criminal law, or that my trip to Algeria was only a pretext by which I hoped to take myself out of the reach of an extradition warrant and so secure myself against being brought to the bar of justice.

I left the country on parole, if I may put it so, and started on my expedition. I went direct to Paris, spent only one night there, and next morning took the train for Marseilles. That much of the journey was not unfamiliar to me, and I can remember that I beguiled most of my hours in the train by reading over again, and not even for the second time, "Our Mutual Friend." I suppose that any one with a properly balanced mind would, if he thought it judicious to read for hours in an express train, have read something which fitted in with the scenery or the historical associations of the country through which he was travelling. But I had come across "Our Mutual Friend" by chance just as I was leaving London, and thought I could not beguile my journey more agreeably than by studying once again a novel to which I think that even Dickens's warmest admirers have not always done justice. For myself, I am inclined to rank it among the best of the great master's novels, and I enjoyed it more than ever during this day of foreign travel. I can now never hear the name of "Our Mutual Friend" mentioned without finding that journey from Paris to Marseilles brought back vividly to my memory, and without seeing

myself in the railway carriage, bending over the pages of the delightful novel.

I crossed from Marseilles to Algiers and had in every way a satisfactory passage, but it seemed very long to me, for the good reason that I was eager to get within sight of my son and daughter again. They were on the shore to receive me, and I was gladdened to find that, all things considered, they were in good health and spirits. I took up my quarters with them at the Hotel Mustapha, in the Mustapha quarter of the city, and we devoted ourselves to a study of Algiers and all the places of interest in its neighbourhood. I was not able, even here, to indulge myself in a complete holiday, for I had brought with me a short novel which I had then in hand, and was bound to complete within a definite time. So I did a fair amount of literary work every day, and the rest of the time we devoted to seeing the sights. There were many English and American families then either living in Algiers or on a visit there like ourselves, and I formed some friendships which are living for me at the present day. One singular experience which I had during my Algerian visit seems to me well worthy of mention. There was an English lady who had long settled down to life in Algiers and was devoting herself mainly to the teaching of children, and after that to the culture of bees and flowers. This lady turned out to be a friend of my wife, who had acted as her bridesmaid on

the day of her marriage, and whom I had not seen from that day until the time of our first meeting in Algiers. Our marriage took place at a provincial town in the north of England, where the bridesmaid was then living. After our return to Liverpool we had only heard of her from time to time, and when we settled in London, later on, we were told that she had left England altogether. A whole lifetime of mental growth, experience, and emotion had been passed through by me between the day when I first saw this lady and the day on which I came to meet her in her Algerian home. We had much to say to each other about the changes which had taken place in that long interval.

I enjoyed my stay in Algiers very much, although the climate somewhat disappointed me. I had got it into my mind that an Algerian winter must be very like an Egyptian winter, and I was not prepared for occasional torrents of drenching rain, or for fierce winds howling through thick clusters of trees. But the scenery was beautiful; the sea, whether rough or smooth, was ever glorious to look upon; there was much sun and blue sky; and the city of Algiers itself, with its strange agglomeration of various nationalities and national peculiarities, was always intensely interesting. Still working at my unfinished story, I yet found time to make notes of scenes and sights around and in Algiers, which I intended to use as materials for

a novel to be constructed with that region for its ground. This was my one and only attempt to work at a story with the assistance of preliminary notes. I accomplished many pages of notes, but I never accomplished and never even attempted the novel. It remains on the shelf, metaphorically that is to say, with my romance about Constantinople and my romance about Jerusalem. It therefore did not even decide the question whether I could work more successfully as a novelist with or without preliminary notes.

These references to novel-writing remind me that I had an opportunity in Algiers of renewing my acquaintance with Miss Rhoda Broughton, the novelist, who was making that pleasant region her home for the winter. I was not able to make my stay extend very long in Algiers because I was anxious to be once again in attendance at the Commission Court, where, as I had reason to believe, some very important evidence was soon to be taken. I spent but a few weeks altogether in Algiers, and then returned to London with my son and daughter. I reached London in time to come in for the events which brought to a close the career of Pigott, the informer. Everybody knows how Pigott completely broke down under the terrible cross-examination to which he was subjected by Sir Charles Russell, and how by his way of spelling certain words out of a number of which Russell called upon him to write down, he

identified himself with the misspelling contained in the first of the forged letters; how he fled from the country to Spain and took refuge in Madrid, and how when the Spanish police came to seek him there in order to execute a warrant issued for his arrest under the Extradition Treaty, he closed his wretched life by suicide. His act of self-slaughter was not needed to satisfy the Commission Court and the whole world that the Parnell letters were forgeries. Before his flight from England he had actually confessed to Mr. Henry Labouchere, in the presence of the late George Augustus Sala, and by an entirely unsolicited confession, that the letters were forgeries. It is only right to say that even before Pigott's flight the Attorney-General had publicly withdrawn the forged letters from the case, and had expressed his sincere regret that they ever had been published, or had ever been offered as evidence. After Pigott's suicide there was practically an end of the whole case.

There is one event I must record which occurred at this time, — before the story of the Commission had come to an end, — John Bright died in 1889.

It is one of the cherished usages of the House of Commons that when a distinguished member dies some spoken tribute to his memory should be offered by the leader of the Government, the leader of the Opposition, and the leader of any

recognised Parliamentary party. When the sad news came of John Bright's death, it fell to my lot to say some words on behalf of the Irish National party. It was to me an occasion of the most profound melancholy. I had enjoyed Bright's friendship for many years, and the feeling of melancholy was made all the more profound because of late we had been divided on the great question of Home Rule for Ireland. Yet I could not but feel a certain relief to my sad thoughts in being thus allowed to speak out my full sense of all that Ireland had owed to him and to his friendship in days when she had few other friends among great English statesmen, and I thought it well that an Irish Home Ruler should say for his party and his country that the memory of the services John Bright had rendered was not in any sense effaced because he had not seen his way to accept the principle of Home Rule. I spoke only a few sentences, but their general purport was the expression of that feeling. When I had paid my tribute to the genius, the noble character, and the public services of Bright, I went on to assure the House that Ireland was not so short of memory as to forget what Bright had done for her in other days, or so ungrateful as to suppress her sense of those past services because he had of late not gone the whole way in support of her national cause. Ireland, I said, still claimed her right to lay her immortelle, her funeral wreath,

on this great Englishman's grave. I do not know how the speech impressed the House, but I know that it came from my very heart, and that no more sincere tribute could have been offered to the memory of a lost friend and an illustrious orator and statesman. I know too that I spoke with the voice of Ireland.

In February, 1890, the report of the Special Commission was issued as a Blue Book and laid formally before the House of Commons. I shall never forget the extraordinary scramble which took place among members of the House for copies of that report when the moment came for their distribution. We could not wait to receive them in the ordinary course, but gathered in a crowd around the office, in the inner lobby, from which the slender volumes were to be issued. As there seemed no possibility of having anything like a systematic and decorous giving out of the volumes among so impatient a throng, somebody suggested in loud tones that they should be hurled out in heaps, and thus captured by those who could get at them. The suggestion was acted upon, and the volumes were showered forth over the heads of the nearest members, by whom they were either caught in their flight or competed for as they fell upon the pavement of the lobby. I have never seen a more amusing spectacle within the precincts of the House of Commons, or one more absurdly out of keeping with the historical

and traditional dignity of that assembly. A crowd of children scrambling for apples or cakes at some holiday saturnalia could not have struggled and scuffled with greater eagerness and less regard for the dignity of Parliament than the members in the lobby struggled for their share of these important papers. I was lucky enough to secure two copies for myself, and I may frankly confess that I did not stop to consider whether I was or was not clutching more than my fair share of the distributed report. It is fortunate for that dignity of history concerning which Macaulay wrote with so much contempt, that the frescoes of the House of Commons lobbies have not been added to by a pictured representation of that scramble for the reports of the Special Commission.

The report of the Commission was found to be satisfactory by the general public in Ireland as well as in England. The judges declared that the letters published in "The Times" as coming from Parnell and signed by him or written by him were forgeries. They found that neither Parnell nor any of his colleagues had supplied any one with funds in order to enable him to escape from justice. They gave it also as their judgment that the charge of insincerity in the denunciation of crime and outrage had not been established in the case of any of the defendants who may be said to have been put upon their trial before the Special Commission. These were the only questions in which

the world in general took any interest. All that was made known by the evidence taken before the Commission outside these questions was already perfectly well known to every one who had taken the slightest interest in the political and agrarian movement going on in Ireland. No one needed to be told that some inflammatory speeches had been made now and then during the course of either movement, that rough deeds had been done in the struggle between the landlords and the tenants, and that leading members of the Irish National League, some of them members of the Irish Parliamentary party, had been openly engaged in the preparations for the Fenian insurrection. What the public wanted to know was whether Parnell and his colleagues had been guilty of planning or countenancing armed rebellion, whether they had been guilty of inciting to crime, whether they had been insincere in their professed denunciation of crime and outrage, and whether they had given money to help men to escape from criminal justice. On all these questions the verdict of the Commission Court was a verdict of acquittal.

The report of the Commission was received on the whole with much satisfaction by Parnell and his colleagues. We now felt quite secure that henceforward, whatever difficulties might come in our way, and whatever clamour might be raised against us, we should hear no more of Parnellism

and Crime. I may remind my readers that when "The Times" was issuing its articles under the heading of "Parnellism and Crime," the Irish National members generally were not only willing but even anxious to submit the whole case to the decision of some authorised court of inquiry. Parnell more than once publicly proclaimed his readiness to submit the whole case to the judgment of a Committee of the House of Commons specially chosen for the investigation. We all therefore felt quite satisfied with the course events had taken. Parnell brought an action against "The Times" to recover damages for the charges made against him, and "The Times" had to pay five thousand pounds as an atonement for what it had written. This action was only brought by Parnell as a means of obtaining a final and legal condemnation of the false charges which had been made against him by the newspaper which had accepted Pigott as its trusted source of information. Other members of the party might have brought similar actions; but we all, or almost all, felt that enough had been done to clear our characters, and that the acquittal of Parnell was the acquittal of his colleagues. I have said "all, or almost all," because there was, if I remember rightly, one member of the party who did bring an action against "The Times" on his own account; but he was a somewhat eccentric personage, who was not regarded with much favour as a political comrade

by Parnell or the party in general. The manner in which the House of Commons as a whole interpreted the report of the Commission was illustrated most effectively by the reception given to Parnell when, after the close of the Commission, he made his first appearance there. Parnell came in rather late that evening and the House was crowded. The moment he made his appearance the whole of the Liberal party, then in Opposition, rose up to welcome him, and many of the members on the Conservative side sprang to their feet and joined in the welcome. It need not be said that all the Irish National members stood up and bore their part in this remarkable demonstration. The cheering was again and again renewed. It was indeed a display of many feelings on the part of those who paid their tribute of respect to the leader of the Irish party. Men felt that however they might differ from Parnell in political creed, he had been fully acquitted of unjust charges, and that it was due as well to themselves as to him that they should in this striking fashion express their honest sentiments.

If the career of Charles Stewart Parnell had come to a close soon after that memorable scene in the House of Commons, it would have been better for his own fame and for the cause of his country. I need not tell in detail the story of the events which followed in his life and beyond question hastened his early death. I am not likely

ever to forget one evening during a short visit of mine to Cannes, where I had gone to see an invalid friend. I was preparing to leave Cannes for London that night, and in the hall of the hotel I met an English clergyman with whom I was acquainted, who told me that Parnell had been made co-respondent in a divorce case. I had something to think of that night on my homeward journey. The news was not altogether startling to me, for I had long known that some such event was likely to take place; but there is always a sense of shock when we learn that a not unforeseen trouble has actually come. When I reached London, I found that the news was only too true, and that the Irish Parliamentary party were thrown into utter confusion by the sudden opening of such a case at a time of critical importance to Ireland. The first resolve among us all was that we must stand by Parnell through the trouble. However we might deplore the fact that the scandal should have arisen, and might grieve to see the career of our leader and friend stained by a breach of the moral law, we could not but feel that it was only a sin of private life, which did not, according to ordinary experience, affect a statesman's right to act as the leader of a party and to strive for the cause of his country. We knew of cases in which English statesmen of high political position had been accused of like offences, and yet had not been regarded as necessarily unfit for the business of

political life. Many of us were of opinion that the best course for Parnell to take would be to keep out of public and Parliamentary life for a time, still retaining his position as leader of the party, and then, when he had done the justice that was in his power towards his partner in the scandal, and when the whole sensation had somewhat faded away, to return to his old place and his old work. An influential member of an English political party gave him by letter the brief and sound advice — "Retire, marry, return." That was indeed the course which I fully believed at the time Parnell was likely to adopt. I felt quite sure that the moment he obtained the legal opportunity he would marry the woman whom he deeply loved and who deeply loved him. There were abundant evidences to convince us that Parnell's dearest wish was to become the husband of the lady. In fact, he offered no defence when the case came before the divorce court, and allowed the judgment of the court to go against him and her. I could not help remembering then that I was present on the occasion when Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea first met and became acquainted. It was at a luncheon party given in London by a near relative of Mrs. O'Shea, and I can well recollect that even at this first meeting of theirs I thought Parnell seemed greatly attracted towards her. From that time he became a frequent visitor at her house, and this was in itself remarkable, inasmuch as Parnell

never cared about London society, and seldom went to a dinner party or a luncheon party except at the houses of his most intimate friends. For some time there had been a good deal of casual talk about Parnell's attachment to this lady, until at last those among us who knew him well began to fear that trouble would come of it.

The only question for the Irish party to consider just now was as to the best course for Parnell to take with regard to the political crisis and the interests of the national cause. The country was on the eve of a General Election, and there was a fear arising among most of us that the scandal of the divorce court might affect injuriously the votes of Liberal electors in the approaching contest. We then looked to the Liberal party of Great Britain as our strength and support, and it was certain that if Gladstone should be once again in power, he would instantly bring forward another measure of Home Rule. But if the divorce court proceedings were to affect any large proportion of British Liberal voters so as to make them hesitate about giving their votes on the side of the Irish party still led by Parnell, it seemed only too likely that the national cause must suffer for the personal scandal. It was not, perhaps, to be supposed that any considerable number of British Liberals would vote against Mr. Gladstone merely because of Parnell's offence, but it is always easy for a doubting elector to satisfy his conscience by keeping away

from the polling-booth on the day of the election. We all knew that the scandal would turn a large number of voters in England, Scotland, and Wales against Parnell, and without going so far as to say in the words of Macaulay that nothing can be more ridiculous than the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality, we could not doubt that many a British voter would find a conscientious excuse for not giving any support to that Irish national cause about which he had at no time felt any particular enthusiasm. The crisis was made the more difficult for the Irish National members who were then in London because of the fact that several of our most influential and trusted colleagues, on whose judgment we greatly relied, were then unable to be with us. T. P. O'Connor, T. D. Sullivan, and T. M. Harrington, the late Lord Mayor of Dublin, were in the United States on a political mission. Mr. John Dillon and Mr. William O'Brien were out of England for another reason, and one of a somewhat peculiar nature. Ireland was then under a system of coercion, and the ordinary laws and the ordinary usages of the British Constitution did not apply to her. A man could be arrested and imprisoned for an indefinite time, if he delivered a speech in any part of Ireland which the authorities of Dublin Castle were pleased to regard as seditious in character. For a speech condemning the existing Conservative Government, which a man might

have spoken at any public meeting in England, Scotland, or Wales, without the remotest idea of legal action being taken against him, he could in Ireland be instantly arrested and sent to prison as one suspected of seditious purposes. John Dillon and William O'Brien and some other distinguished members of our party were at that time under the ban of the exceptional laws, if they can be called laws, against seditious speeches in Ireland, and could not make their appearance in Ireland or even in England without facing the liability to instant arrest. Some of these colleagues had made a temporary abode in Paris or in Boulogne, and to consult with them it was necessary that Thomas Sexton and I should make several visits together to Boulogne as the nearest neutral ground on which we could take counsel with our friends. I am not likely to forget, and I think Sexton is not likely to forget, some rapid rushes we made in frosty winter weather to and from Boulogne for this mysterious purpose.

The crisis was now approaching in London. It had always been our custom to reëlect the chairman and officers of our party at the opening of each session. The session was near at hand, and on its opening day we held a meeting of our party in the since famous Committee Room No. 15, and at once reëlected to their former places Parnell and those of his colleagues who had held official position. This was in accordance with

the previous determination even of those who believed that the best thing for the national cause would be that Parnell should absent himself from political life until the scandal of the divorce court should be in some degree removed or repaired. In the mean time Mr. Gladstone had become very anxious that Parnell should keep out of political life for the time, because he was strongly of opinion that if Parnell were to remain the active leader of the Irish National party during this crisis, the effect upon the votes at the General Election would be disastrous to the chances of the next Home Rule measure. Mr. Gladstone was led to believe that there would be no difficulty in prevailing upon Parnell to adopt this course, because he well remembered that, at the time of the Phœnix Park murders, Parnell wrote to him offering to resign his seat in Parliament if Gladstone thought that such a step just then would be advantageous to the national cause of Ireland. I had some conversation with Mr. Gladstone on the subject after the decision of the divorce court, and I could only tell him that I had not yet received from Parnell any intimation of his intentions on the subject. Gladstone was not by any means inclined to press on Parnell any such conditions, but there was great agitation among various Liberal bodies, especially, perhaps, Nonconformist bodies, throughout Great Britain, and many of Gladstone's leading colleagues assured him that there would be no chance

for the Liberals at the General Election if Parnell were to remain the active leader of the Irish Home Rule party. Gladstone's views on the whole subject are given in letters of his which John Morley has lately published in his life of the great statesman. It is well to introduce here a passage of Gladstone's letter to John Morley. "While clinging to the hope of a communication from Mr. Parnell, to whomsoever addressed, I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangement for the commencement of the session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr. McCarthy with the conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had myself arrived. It was that, notwithstanding the splendid service rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland. I think I may be warranted in asking you so far to expand the conclusion I have given above, as to add that the continuance I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal party, based as it has been mainly upon the prosecution of the Irish cause, almost a nullity. This explanation of my views I begged Mr. McCarthy to regard as confidential and not intended for his colleagues generally, if he found that Mr. Parnell contem-

plated spontaneous action; but I also begged that he would make known to the Irish party at their meeting to-morrow afternoon that such was my conclusion, if he should find that Mr. Parnell had not in contemplation any step of the nature indicated."

Much discussion has taken place about the communication made by Mr. Gladstone to me, and the course I adopted with regard to it. I can only say that at the earliest possible opportunity I made Parnell acquainted with Mr. Gladstone's views and wishes, and I took some of my leading colleagues into my confidence on the subject. Our one great difficulty was to avoid impressing on Parnell the idea that Gladstone was assuming towards him something of a dictatorial position, which certainly was not in Gladstone's mind, but which, if too much pressure were brought to bear, Parnell might regard in such a light and be disposed to resent. Parnell just then was naturally in a condition of much excitement; he was by temperament a nervous man, although he was almost always able to conceal his emotions, and at this time he was much disturbed and even distracted by the events then going on. Some of his colleagues in the Irish party and many of his supporters outside had, for a long time, been striving to fill his mind with the idea that the Irish National party was becoming too much dependent on the English Liberal leaders, and was, in fact, accepting the position of a

mere hanger-on or vassal to English Liberalism. I felt that there was at least a possibility of Parnell's taking a wrong view of Gladstone's intervention and resenting it as a sort of dictation. None the less I took care to make Gladstone's real purpose fully known to Parnell, and at first I had no reason to doubt that he put the true interpretation on it. Some of us urged that Parnell, when formally reëlected as chairman of the party, should announce his intention to withdraw for a while from Parliament and public life, and that the management of the party should be entrusted to a committee of members, each of whom should be nominated by Parnell himself. But it soon became evident that Parnell was yielding more and more to the influence of a few members of the party and several advisers outside, and that he was growing to regard Gladstone's action as an interference with the independence of the party, and accordingly to resent it. I saw with much pain that this spirit was growing on him. For a while he saw but little of the colleagues with whom I was mostly associated, and it was not easy to come to any clear idea as to the policy he meant to adopt.

Suddenly, however, Parnell told me that it was his intention to issue a manifesto condemning Gladstone, the Liberal party in general, the British Nonconformists in particular, and the whole British public more or less, for a course of action

which he declared to be directed against the independence of the Irish party and the Irish people. He asked me to meet him at the house of a friend of his, a member of the Irish party, to hear the manifesto read before its publication and to offer my opinion as to the desirability of issuing it. I met him accordingly, and found that he had with him some few members of the party who had complained from the first of Gladstone's intervention. I objected to the manifesto altogether and point by point, and I did all in my power to prevail on Parnell to give it up. I assured Parnell of my strong conviction that if such a manifesto were issued on the authority of himself and the few colleagues who took his view on the subject, the result must certainly be an immediate break-up in the Irish National party. I pressed these opinions of mine as earnestly as I could on Parnell, and I reiterated my objections and arguments with a pertinacity which my party would have reckoned to my credit if we had been conducting an obstructive debate in the House of Commons. But all my efforts could get no further concession from Parnell than his consent to postpone the issue of the manifesto for twenty-four hours. During that short intervening period I saw Parnell more than once, and I believe some of my colleagues also saw him and tried to impress upon him their opinions, which were the same as my own. Nothing came of our efforts, and the

manifesto was given to the world. The effect was conclusive, so far as the unity of the party was concerned, for the time. The large majority of my colleagues felt as I did, that we could not consent at such a moment to follow a leader who had, without any attempt to obtain the concurrence of the whole party, taken a step which seemed fatal to all the present hopes of the Irish national cause.

The next chapter in that mournful history was supplied by the meetings of the party in Committee Room No. 15. It may be well to tell some of my readers that it was then, and probably is still, the custom of the authorities of Westminster Palace to allow to any recognised party in the House of Commons the habitual use of one of the committee rooms for the purpose of holding its business meetings. We of the Irish National party had long been allowed the use of Committee Room No. 15, and it was in this room we met during many successive days to debate on the momentous crisis which had arisen in our political fortunes. I need not go over this painful story in detail. It was urged on Parnell by those who thought, as I did, that he should for the time keep away from the House and allow the business of the party to be conducted, as I have said, by a committee, of which he should have the nomination. Parnell, however, refused to act on any such suggestion, and it soon became painfully evident

to us that some few of his colleagues were even more stern and bitter than he in hostility to our offered compromise. The debates naturally grew more heated as the days went on. Some newspapers afterwards published accounts of passionate scenes taking place in the committee room, and one journal, at least, went so far as to publish descriptions of violent encounters interrupting the debates. Perhaps I need hardly say that nothing whatever occurred in Committee Room No. 15 which gave the slightest excuse for such grotesque misrepresentation. The debates were conducted on the whole without the slightest breach of decorum and good order, and only in few instances did a speaker use words or make charges which could be regarded as personally offensive to any one at either side of the controversy. But we soon saw that there was not any hope whatever of our being able to prevail upon Parnell to reconsider his determination, and that any further discussion on the subject would be only a waste of time and temper. At that time I was still vice-chairman of the Irish party, and it seemed to me that I was bound to take the initiative in suggesting the only course now left open to the large majority of the party. I therefore rose and said that all further debate could only be useless or else harmful, and I called upon all who felt with me to follow me. My colleagues who thought with me readily adopted my invitation as the sole means of putting an

end to an utterly futile debate. The great majority of the party left Committee Room No. 15 with me, and only a small group of members remained with Parnell. The Irish National party was for the time broken up.

CHAPTER XX

"THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE"

THEN there followed an entirely new experience for me. Ireland had now become the scene of struggle between those who followed the majority of the Irish National party and those who held with Parnell. There were some bye-elections coming on in Ireland, and these gave a distressing opportunity for this trial of strength. Parnell set out to stump the country on behalf of the minority of the party, and we had to follow his example and to maintain our own cause against him. After the close of the meetings in Committee Room No. 15, the minority of the Irish National members elected Parnell as their leader, while the majority held a meeting of their own and conferred on me the office of chairman. It was not a moment when even a much more ambitious man than I could have thought about gratified ambition in this sudden elevation. The position to which I was raised was one of intense responsibility in every sense. To hold such a position at such a time threatened a most serious inroad on that literary work which was my chief enjoyment and my only means of making a living. But that

was not the consideration which mainly occupied my mind during that distracting time. It seemed a cruel stroke of fate which compelled me to stand forth as the political opponent of Parnell, to whom as a leader I had long been most sincerely devoted, and with whom I had had many years of intimate and steady friendship. I was also suddenly brought into hostility with men like John Redmond and many others who had been colleagues and close friends of mine for a long time, and whose motives, even in this crisis of political disruption, I thoroughly appreciated. I quite understood why these men were upholding Parnell. They believed him to be the best leader the Irish people could have, and they could not see the rightfulness of withdrawing from his leadership because he had committed an offence against the laws of private morality. On this latter point we were all agreed, and those of us who formed the majority would never have thought of withdrawing from Parnell's leadership had it not been for the issue of that manifesto which we believed to be fatal to the immediate success of the Home Rule cause. We were, according to our convictions, putting the interests of the country above any consideration for the individual, while our opponents, it seemed to us, were, consciously or unconsciously, making loyalty to their country subservient to loyalty to the man.

I could not but feel deeply the pain of any posi-

tion which set me in direct antagonism to those whose action I had to oppose, but whose motives I felt bound to respect. I felt also my mind weighed down by a sense of the responsibility which I had to undertake when I accepted the position of a party leader in Irish politics. My long residence in England had not allowed me to keep up that continuous and intimate acquaintance with the political and agrarian condition of Ireland which was possessed by Parnell and by many or most of our colleagues, and I could not persuade myself that I was the man best qualified to hold such a place at such a time. At that moment, however, there seemed no other man ready to accept the position whose name would not have been likely to create difference of opinion, and union of opinion and action was essential to our work. I accepted, therefore, the position given to me, and was resolved to do the best I could for our common cause; but there was most assuredly no feeling of gratified ambition in my mind as I entered on my new duties and was setting out with my colleagues for the party struggle on Irish soil.

Then comes that entirely new experience to which I alluded at the opening of this chapter. We were to make our first great demonstration in the city of Cork. I was returning to my birthplace under strangely altered conditions. I had not lived in Cork since my early manhood, and although I

had in recent years made my appearance there on political platforms, it was always as the representative of a great united National party, having the cordial support of the vast majority of the Irish people. Now I was about to present myself for the first time as leader of one division of that party in open antagonism to the other. I knew well that Parnell had an immense number of supporters in the city and county of Cork, and that although the Irish Catholic clergy were on the whole entirely with us, even their great influence had not been strong enough to prevent a large proportion of Irish Nationalists from holding determinedly to the leadership of Parnell. Some words of Parnell's own, which spoke of his being thrown to the English wolves, had been caught up and repeated all over the country, and they put his position, as he would himself have desired to put it, with the most telling effect on the loyalty and devotion of his followers. There could be no doubt that I was now about to revisit my native city under conditions which must make me a most unwelcome and odious visitor to thousands of those from whom during my political life up to that time I had had nothing but the most friendly and cordial reception. I have always cherished a feeling towards my native city which highly practical observers might regard as merely sentimental, and my heart sank at the thought of having to become an object of dislike and hostility to so many

of my fellow-citizens. Thoughts such as these occupied my mind a good deal as my daughter and I were making our way from Dublin to Cork. Several of my colleagues, among whom were Thomas Sexton and Arthur O'Connor, were going with me. As we journeyed on southwards and the evening was growing late, I began to be filled with a somewhat ignoble hope that we might arrive in Cork at an hour after many of its population had gone to their homes, and that our coming might not have been made known previously to the inhabitants in general. But when our train stopped for a short time at Mallow Station my faint-hearted hopes received a sudden and complete discouragement, although it came from a kindly source. On the platform at Mallow were assembled some groups of residents, all of them sympathisers with our side of the political question, who had come to present us with an address of welcome and encouragement. This was a cheering event in itself, and I have no doubt that stouter hearts than mine would have been uplifted by it; but I am sorry to say that the first impression it made on my mind was the conviction that as we were expected in Mallow we must assuredly be expected in Cork, where a very different sort of demonstration was likely to greet us. We all knew very well that we had an immense number of sympathisers in Cork, but it was not likely to include many of that class of the population

who would indulge in noisy and hostile demonstrations at the railway terminus. The journey from Mallow to Cork is not long, and when we reached the railway station of the southern city I found at once that my worst anticipations were on the verge of realisation. A large crowd had assembled on the platform, and from outside the precincts of the station itself we could hear the tumultuous groanings and hootings of a very much larger crowd, unmistakably assembled there for the purpose of giving us anything but a friendly welcome. On the platform something like order was preserved as we came out of the train, and a large number of friends and sympathisers, including several Catholic priests, came forward to receive us and act as our safe-conduct. Some stalwart priests were my escort to the omnibus which was to carry me to the hotel. I had only to step from the station into the omnibus, but even in that short time my identity made itself known to the crowd, and the moment I got into the omnibus a shower of stones crashed against the windows and reduced some of them to shivers. One of the priests who got in with me was carrying a large cloak or plaid, and he earnestly recommended me to wrap this round my head and shoulders for protection, reminding me that if I got an injury it might make me unable to do any work during the Cork campaign, and also might bring discredit on the people of Cork, who did

not deserve to be identified with the doings of a mere rowdy mob. I did not feel, however, that I could possibly assent to this kindly proposition. I could not reconcile my mind to the idea of the new leader of an Irish National party making his undignified way through the streets with a protecting cloak wrapped over his head and shoulders. The Spartan borne upon his shield might well be regarded as a picturesque and heroic spectacle, but the Spartan with his head muffled in a cloak would be a sorry and grotesque sight. Nor did it seem to me that I could endure thus to enter my native city for the first time since my election to leadership, disguised by an undignified and ludicrous covering. So with the resolve of one who assumes heroic virtue if he has it not, I firmly declined the proposal to screen my identity and protect my head. We reached our hotel in safety, although we were followed for a great part of the way by a shouting crowd, who greeted their returning fellow-citizen with words of anything but welcome. Wherever we went during our stay we were liable to encounter, as we walked through the streets, demonstrations from the moving crowds which made it plain to us that the Parnellites formed a strong body in Cork, and that we had many frank and open-mouthed political opponents.

We held a big public meeting in Cork, and a number of Cork's best citizens appeared on our platform and gave us all their support. The vast

hall in which we held our meeting was crowded to excess, and although many Parnellites had secured admission, there was no disturbance of the proceedings. We passed our resolutions, made our speeches, and explained to my fellow-citizens our purposes, our hopes, and our justification for the course we had felt bound to take. Everything passed off quite as well as we could have expected. Whenever I speak of this meeting I remember an amusing thing which happened at it. A well-known Cork man was making a speech, and during it he expressed his regret for having to oppose Parnell, as he much admired him and had known him for many years. "I knew him," he said, "since he was in petticoats." "Ah!" whispered a witty colleague of mine to a friend on the platform, "it would have been well if he had let them alone after that."

As I have said, I could not cross a street without meeting with signs of disapproval from the crowds, and I therefore could not indulge myself in the fond belief that I enjoyed the entire sympathy of my fellow-citizens, and that my reception was one of unalloyed welcome. I saw little or nothing of the city, and had not an opportunity even of looking at those loved and once familiar spots beside the river which were so constantly in my memory. When the time came for leaving the city and to carry on our campaign in other places, our departure gave me a new occasion for melan-

choly reflection. We found the Cork railway station by which we were to depart completely guarded outside and in by a large body of constabulary under the command of the Chief Inspector. The platform might be described as practically in police occupation. The Chief Inspector was very gracious and polite, and shook hands with us as we got into our carriage; but he called our attention to the fact that he felt bound to see us safely in, and that he had thought it necessary to use all the precautions so evident to us in order to make sure that no breach of the peace could interfere with our departure.

There is a charming old German ballad of a young man leaving his native town and going forth to seek his fortune in the wide world. The departing youth tells us that he wanders through the streets of the town unheeded by anybody, and that no one gives him that "Geleit" or friendly escort which makes so encouraging and sympathetic a farewell; that nobody tore his coat while tenderly trying to hold him back, and, indeed, he remarks parenthetically that the poor old garment would have been much the worse for such a sign of affection; and that no one bit his cheek in the too fervent effort to give him a last loving goodbye. The lines of the once familiar ballad came into my mind as we were leaving the Cork terminus that day. My trouble was of an entirely different nature from that which made the hero of

the ballad complain against fate. I had a very numerous and strong escort to see me safely out of the city, I was not allowed to saunter anywhere unheeded and alone, and this was precisely what constituted the melancholy of that parting. Yet I found a very different view taken by the writer of a leading article in one of the National papers entirely devoted to Parnell. The writer of this article was, I believe, a member of the Nationalist party in the House of Commons, and a great friend of my own up to the present time. His object evidently was to lay as much emphasis as possible on the devotion of the Cork crowds to the Parnellite side of the controversy, and yet to make the whole event as soothing to my personal feelings as possible. He began by extolling my exalted qualities of head and heart, and so forth, then described in eloquent and glowing words the admiration which every Cork citizen must and did feel for me, and finally pointed his moral by asking the impartial reader to consider how profound must be in the mind of Cork the conviction that Parnell was right when even Justin McCarthy, when representing the opposite side, could receive but a cold welcome in the city of his birth.

The article might have made me feel prouder than I had done as our train passed out of the Cork terminus, if I had not been sure that I could recognise the hand of the writer, and known that he sincerely wanted to make things as pleasant

for me as they could be made under the conditions. I have a strong impression that the semi-military escort given to me came in great measure from the desire of the local authorities to magnify at once their own office and the danger they professed to guard against, and to make it seem that all Irish demonstrations on either side of the national cause were sure, if not carefully guarded, to lead to scenes of violence. The majority of the Cork magistrates were either stanch Conservatives or ultra-loyal Liberals, and were glad of an opportunity for giving further proof to the authorities of Dublin Castle that nothing but the whole strength of the police force could keep those Nationalists from murdering one another. I could not help feeling a sentimental regret that my first visit to my native city in the capacity of a political leader should have been a decidedly unwelcome event to so many of my fellow-citizens.

Our next important expedition was to the city of Kilkenny, in the representation of which a vacancy had occurred and was to be filled up by the election of a new member. The candidate of the party to which I belonged was my dear old friend, Sir John Pope Hennessy, who had for some time settled down to the life of a private citizen, after having held appointment as Governor in many far-away colonies and settlements. Sir John Hennessy, who had been a member of the House of Commons in his early days, had obtained his

first Colonial Governorship through the influence of Disraeli. Now that he had settled down to unofficial life in the British Islands, he felt his love for the ways of Parliament coming up again and was anxious to obtain a seat in the House. He had always been a sincere Nationalist even while he held his Government appointments, and before the split took place in the Irish National party it had been understood that Parnell was to adopt him as a candidate at the first opportunity. When the action in the divorce court became a scandal and was followed by Parnell's manifesto, Sir John did not see his way to accept Parnell as leader, and with his devotion to the authority of the Catholic Church he could not bring himself to go against the declarations of the leading Catholic Bishops and Priests in Great Britain and Ireland as to the moral effect of the divorce suit on Parnell's claims to leadership. The majority of the National party at once adopted him as their candidate for Kilkenny, and several Nationalist members, among whom were Thomas Sexton, T. M. Healy, and myself, joined him at Kilkenny. We had a stirring time of it there. I was particularly amused and delighted by the imperturbable courage and composure which Hennessy showed during the whole of the struggle. The streets of the city and the outlying roads were crowded every day by the supporters of either side, and there were occasional tumults which called for police intervention, al-

though no really serious and dangerous disturbance occurred.

Despite all my years of experience in political conflict, I have always felt a nervous dislike to the pressure and the rush of crowds. Even when they were altogether friendly and applauding crowds, such as used to welcome me when I arrived at the railway station in Longford, my constituency for many years, I felt a sense of relief when the welcoming reception was over and I was quietly settled in my hotel. But in Kilkenny the condition of things was wholly different. There we had the elements of conflict, and our cheering crowds were met by hissing and hooting crowds through which we had to walk or drive in the best way we could. Sir John Hennessy seemed to take the whole experience as if it were part of some delightful entertainment. He and I often drove through and around the city in the dear old jaunting-car which affords about as little protection to its occupants as the fearlessness of man could desire. Hennessy was always bland, smiling, and serene. When we were hooted and denounced by passing groups, he raised his hat and bowed gracefully as if we were receiving genial compliments. He would not listen to the idea of making the slightest circuit to escape the chance of meeting a hostile crowd, and he occasionally made some good-humoured and amusing rejoinder to a loud-voiced comment on our political conduct. I sup-

pose he had been through too many serious dangers during his periods of administration in disturbed regions to take any serious view of the perils of electioneering in Ireland, and from his very boyhood he had always shown an indomitable self-possession and courage. Hennessy's unvarying good spirits and rapidness of talk were in no sense stimulated, even during this election campaign, by the artificial aids which not uncommonly help to keep up the courage of men engaged in such battles. Although he was not in his maturer years a total abstainer, he was one of the most abstemious men I have ever met in social life. When he was a guest at a dinner party he allowed his glass of wine to be filled so that he might conform with the ways of social life, but he hardly ever did more than put his lips to the wine, and for the rest of the meal left it untasted. In this peculiarity he reminded me of John Bright, and also, indeed, of Charles Stewart Parnell. Hennessy was fond of milk and cream and the like nutritious draughts, and it was a curious sight to see him, when we returned to our Kilkenny hotel late at night and some friends came in with us for a morsel of supper, revelling in the luxury of a bowl of whey as his share in the festivity. He had a marvellous gift of humorous and brilliant talk, and was one of the most inexhaustible and at the same time delightful talkers it has ever been my good fortune to know.

I was not able to see the contest to its end, for the conferences going on in Boulogne made it necessary that some of us should go over there, and my colleagues and other friends in Kilkenny thought that I ought to be one of the ambassadors. I would much rather have remained for the result of the Kilkenny election, but we had good reason to believe that the triumph of our candidate was certain, and therefore, in company with two or three of my colleagues, I left the scene of electoral struggle and started for Boulogne. It was, in fact, in the shop of an English bookseller and news-agent in Boulogne that I first heard the news of Sir John Hennessy's election as member for Kilkenny. Thus my old friend from early boyish days was now to enter the House of Commons again and to join the National party under my leadership. We had been separated for half a life-time, while I was working at literature and journalism, with politics combined, and he was representing the British Empire in many foreign regions from West Africa to China. I thought of our old days in the Cork Temperance Institute and the Cork Historical Society when I heard the news which told me that we were now to be companions as fellow-members of the great debating society in Westminster Palace. I little knew at that moment how soon our new companionship was destined to end. John Pope Hennessy was my junior by some years, and seemed in the possession of

vigorous vitality. I could not have foreseen how short a time he was to serve under my Parliamentary leadership, and how soon I should have to enroll him in my memory among the friends whom I had loved and lost.

Meanwhile, my personal relations with Parnell continued to be on a friendly footing. When the Parliamentary session opened we met often for the purpose of arranging business matters which had been left unsettled since the split in the party took place, and Parnell always received me with his old-time cordiality. On one occasion we went together to a banking house in the city to make new arrangements about the appropriation of some funds which had been deposited there in his name in the days when he was leader of the united party. I only mention this incident because of the astonishment created in Palace Yard when Parnell and I drove up in the same hansom to the members' entrance of the House of Commons. It was the talk of the lobby for hours after that we two, who were now regarded as deadly enemies, should have come to the House together in such a way as if we had never been separated by disunion of any kind. I had heard from many friends that Parnell was doing serious injury to his health by rushing from place to place in Ireland during a dreary winter, and taxing his strength by the incessant making of speeches to great open-air meetings. I remonstrated with him,

and urged him not to overtax his strength. I pointed out to him that wherever an election contest was likely to take place between the two divisions of the party, the minds of the electors were already so well made up, and the issue in dispute so clearly defined, that no degree of energy and no amount of speech-making on his part could seriously affect the result. I earnestly advised him to let some of his colleagues do most of the electioneering work, and to spare his own strength as far as he possibly could. I told him he might take it for granted that everybody on his own side and on ours would fully understand his reason for not rushing over the country so much, or making quite so many speeches; that he had under his own leadership many men of far greater constitutional strength, and endowed with eloquence which never failed to tell upon a crowd.

Parnell listened to all my remonstrances and counsels quietly and thanked me for them, but he assured me that the incessant movement was at the present crisis likely to do him more good than harm, as it kept him from brooding too much over the troubles that had come upon the country and upon him. In the occasional talks which we had after the break-up of the party no allusion was ever made to the subject of the divorce court, but in every other way we interchanged ideas very much as we might have done if we had still been members of the same party. At the time when I

offered him my advice and when he gave me his answer, I began to think that there might be sound reason in his reply. Perhaps any exercise of physical energy, even though it included severe overtaxing of his strength and nerves, was better for him than constant melancholy brooding over the sudden change in his political fortunes and the break-up of the party once devoted to his leadership. But as time went on, I became more and more convinced that Parnell was actually wearing out his life in a futile struggle. I still remained on terms of friendship with some of his followers who had been close friends of mine in the days when we were all members of the same party, and I came to know that they were filled with the dread, even the conviction, that Parnell was exhausting himself by incessant work, and was hurrying himself on to a fatal break-down. No advice, they told me, no remonstrance, no pleading, could prevail on him to husband his physical resources and to save himself for the great career which they believed was still before him.

The bye-elections meantime were telling heavily against him, and it was easy to foresee that when the General Election, not now far distant, should test the feeling of Ireland, the Irish Nationalist members under the leadership of Parnell must be reduced to an insignificant number. Even before this there were members of Parnell's party who had made up their minds not to seek reëlection to

the House of Commons. Some of these men had thus far followed Parnell through thick and thin because of their political and personal devotion to him rather than because they thoroughly admitted that the course he had taken was under the conditions the right course. They would not desert him at what seemed to be the darkest hour in his fortune, but they were not prepared to return to the House of Commons as members of one fraction of the National party in perpetual antagonism to the other and much greater fraction. If Parnell had only been prevailed upon to keep out of public life for a time, even although he had still remained the nominal leader of the Irish party, it is my firm belief that there would have been no division in the National ranks or in the country, and that the progress of Ireland's great cause would have met with no interruption. Under such conditions an interval of rest might have enabled Parnell to keep his strength and health, to return to public life after his marriage, to succeed in carrying that cause he had done so much to advance, and to rejoice over its triumph. It was not ordained that events should take so happy a course for him and for us. Parnell followed his own idea, "walked his own wild road whither that led him," and it led him to his death. I saw him for the last time scarcely three weeks before his death. He called on me rather late one night at my house in Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea, and we had a long talk over

political events and prospects and on many other subjects, and we talked as friends, for all that had come and gone. He died at Brighton on the 6th of October, 1891, less than six months after his marriage with the woman whom he loved. By a strange and melancholy coincidence I read of his death on the very same day which brought me the news that Sir John Pope Hennessy was dead. I have always regarded Parnell as one of the greatest statesmen of his time. When we consider the poverty of the resources on which he had to rely, when we remember that he had no Imperial funds to support him, no organised administration at his back, that established authority in Westminster and in Dublin Castle was almost ever against him, I think we are entitled to claim for him the position of a really great statesman. One work of unspeakable value which he accomplished was that he taught the Irish people not to waste their strength, their hopes, and their lives in futile attempts to maintain an insurrectionary struggle against the overwhelming force of England, and showed them how the English Constitution itself supplied them with the best machinery under the guidance of such a man as he for accomplishing the triumph of their national cause. No Irish party in the House of Commons ever had anything like the strength and the efficiency which the Irish party under Parnell's leadership enjoyed for so many years, enjoys once again now that it

is again united, and might never have enjoyed if Parnell had not come up to show how the work was to be done. His name will be remembered forever in the history of Ireland. I cannot but feel proud of having served long under the leadership of such a man, having known him well as a friend, and having kept in friendship with him to the last.

CHAPTER XXI

MY LAST MEETING WITH GLADSTONE

The General Election came on in 1892, and the party I had then the honour of leading came into the House of Commons with seventy-two members, while only nine Parnellites were returned by the Irish constituencies. I have many melancholy recollections associated with that time. We, the majority of the Irish Nationalists, had won our success, and had proved that we possessed the confidence of the great majority of the Irish people, but none of us were, at that time, quite in the mood for exulting over our victory. It was always a pain to look upon that small group of Irish Nationalist members who had so lately been our colleagues and comrades, and were now sitting apart from us and compelled by the necessity of their position to take no share in our consultations and our movements. We could not but know that some of these men must have felt bitterly towards us, and we could not but recognise that there was much of generous self-sacrifice in the devotion with which they had followed their old leader to the last.

I may say with sincerity that I had accepted

the leadership of the great majority of the Irish Nationalists because I thought that under all the conditions there was nothing better to be done for the interests of the party and the cause. I was not convinced that I was the right man in the right place, but I believed that my acceptance of the leadership would be less likely to arouse criticism or disparagement than if one of the younger members had been chosen as the successor to Parnell. No one of us considered himself the equal of Parnell, but it seemed that there would be less likelihood of disparaging contrast or of discontent if the vice-chairman of the once united party, who happened also to be one of its oldest members, should be placed in the position of leadership. There were many men in the party of great ability, practical understanding of Irish affairs, and brilliant eloquence, — men like Thomas Sexton, John Dillon, William O'Brien, and T. P. O'Connor, — who had higher qualifications for the position of leader than I. But on the other hand these were men of about the same age, and there might have been something invidious in selecting one of these, none of whom stood in official succession, and setting him above his colleagues with equal political qualifications and about equal in years. I accepted the position offered to me as the best way of extricating the party from a temporary difficulty, but I had made up my mind from the beginning not long to retain the leadership after the party should

settle down and there should seem to be good hopes of complete reunion and reconstruction.

Many personal reasons helped me to this resolve. I saw that it would not be possible for me to give up the whole of my time to politics, as the leader of the party would certainly have to do during the sittings of Parliament, without sacrifice to my literary work. It had become all the more necessary for me to keep to my work as much as possible because a recent event had made a serious inroad on my means of living. An exhibition of Irish industrial products had been started not long before with the object of drawing the attention of the British public and the world in general to the excellent work which Irish brains and Irish hands could accomplish, and thus opening to Ireland an ever expanding market for what she had to sell. The project was organised to a great extent by benevolent Englishmen, among whom were a large number of peers and others of great influence, and the exhibition was to be held on the grounds of Olympia at West Kensington. An executive committee was formed, including many eminent nobles, and it was thought desirable that there should be at least one member of the Irish Parliamentary party on it. The position was offered to Parnell, but he was unwilling to take it for reasons which seemed to me valid and clear. He knew that his name was just then odious to a large number of Englishmen, and he feared that

if he were to occupy a prominent position on the executive, the fact might have a disparaging effect on the success of the exhibition. His great desire was that the exhibition should be a complete success, and he believed that it would be better for that end if I, who had lived so long in England and who was known more to the general English public as an author than as a politician, were to take the place, while the fact that the vice-chairman of the party was a member of the executive would be enough to satisfy Irishmen that the national sentiments of Ireland were not disregarded by the organizers of the enterprise. I readily acceded to his wish and became a member of the executive committee. The list contained the names of several dukes, marquises, earls, and others; but when it came to be a matter of business and work, we soon found that the executive committee was represented at nearly all its meetings by a very small number of its members. There were, in fact, only four of us who were regular in attendance, and these were the late Earl of Leitrim, Lord Arthur Hill, who had been one of the Government Whips in many Conservative Administrations, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, and myself. The exhibition was a distinct success so far as the nature and display of products was concerned, and in obtaining an increase of purchasers for Irish manufactures and giving a fresh stimulus to Irish industries. But in the money sense, where the working of the exhibi-

tion itself was concerned, it turned out to be a failure. I am not enough of a business man to give a clear explanation of the causes of this failure. I believe that the practical or mechanical arrangements for the enterprise were put into the hands of another company which had managed similar enterprises, and that this company itself came into difficulties owing to causes with which the Irish exhibition had nothing to do. So far as I remember, our exhibition would have been a success if its organisers had worked it for themselves, but by putting it into the hands of a separate company, it became involved in the embarrassments of that company and had to bear its share of the loss.

The one fact about which I am quite clear is that the executive committee of our exhibition was made responsible for a large amount of money. But "old Father Antic, the law," intervened with curious effect when the whole question came to be considered in a court of justice. The majority of the judges before whom the subject came up for consideration decided that only those members of the executive committee who habitually attended its meetings were liable for the amount of debt, and that the dukes, marquises, earls, and others who allowed their names to be put on the list of the committee, but who never attended its meetings, were free from all pecuniary responsibility. Perhaps I was too deeply interested in the

effect of the decision to be considered an impartial critic as to the principle laid down; but it certainly seemed to me that the creditors of the executive committee must have advanced their money much more in reliance on the substantial pecuniary position of the dukes and marquises than on that of my colleagues and myself, whom the decree of the court saddled with the whole responsibility. One of the learned judges — Mr. Justice Mathew — differed from the others, and maintained that the men who allowed themselves to be publicly proclaimed as members of the executive committee and did not attend its meetings were just as liable for its failure as those who attended and did the best they could to make it a success. The result of the law proceedings was that those of us against whom the judgment was given were made liable for a very large sum of money. So far as I was concerned, I might as well have been called upon to pay off a fourth part of England's national debt. Many members of both Houses of Parliament contributed by private subscription some thousands of pounds to help us who were members of the one House or the other out of our difficulties; but even this generosity left a large sum still to be made up among ourselves. The whole event was a crisis in my fortunes. I had for many years been giving myself up very much to Parliament, and my literary work had suffered in quality, I am afraid, as well

as in quantity, by my attention to the business of the House of Commons. While the case before the courts was in preparation and was actually going on, I had to pay my share of what I may call the current legal expenses, and this was in itself a heavy trial to my modest revenue. My publishers, Messrs. Chatto & Windus, came to my aid with that friendly promptitude and practical sympathy for which I have more than once had reason to be grateful to them. They bought up some of my copyrights on good terms, and with the condition, suggested by themselves, that I should be enabled to resume the copyright at any time on the repayment of the sum they had given. When I had made the best arrangements I could to meet the claims imposed on me by the failure of the exhibition, I found that I was still a debtor for more than seven thousand pounds to the fund which was necessary for winding up the enterprise. Those of my colleagues on the executive committee on whom the responsibility for the settlement had fallen acted towards me with the utmost consideration and friendliness. Some arrangements were made which were conducted for me by my friend Mr. Fletcher Moulton, the eminent advocate and member of Parliament, by which I was to be allowed an undefined extension of time to pay up my part of the contribution; and in point of fact, my liability was converted into a personal debt towards those of my col-

leagues who had made themselves responsible for the amount of the claims on me. I do not desire to go at any greater length into this part of my history, and I have detailed it at such length chiefly with the object of expressing my grateful sense of the consideration and kindness shown to me by so many of my friends.

The losses entailed on me by my connection with the Irish exhibition made it clear that I could not devote as much time in the future to the work of the Irish National party as I had done in the past, and that the leadership must be transferred at the earliest possible opportunity to some one who was not compelled to work for his living at the same time. It seemed to me that there was one man who had all the qualities necessary for leadership, whose name carried hereditary influence with it among all Irishmen at home and abroad, whose personal character and capacity had won the enthusiastic admiration of Irish Nationalists and had won the respect and confidence of his extreme political opponents, and who could devote, who always devoted, his whole time to the service of his country. My friend John Dillon was the man whom I looked upon as the one most likely to be welcomed by the Nationalist majority and by the great majority of the Irish people as the leader of the new Irish Parliamentary party. Therefore, when the right opportunity came, I resigned my position

as leader of the party and proposed that John Dillon should be elected to the vacant place. He was elected accordingly by the unanimous vote of the party, and as it is the custom of the party to renew the leadership in each succeeding year, I had the honour more than once to propose with success and to carry without opposition Mr. Dillon's reëlection to the place of leader. How well he served his country during his leadership is known to his countrymen, and will be an important part in his country's history.

I had no intention of resigning my seat in the House of Commons when I withdrew from the leadership of my party, and it had not come into my mind at that time that I could ever think of retiring from Parliamentary life so long as I had physical strength for the duties of a member, and so long as I could by vote and voice help in any way towards the success of Ireland's national claims. I continued for some sessions a regular attendant at the sittings of the House of Commons, but as I had no longer the responsibility and the incessant work of the party leader, I was able to get on steadily with my literary productions. I also made a little money now and then by delivering lectures in various cities and towns in England. I found that there was much to interest me in this kind of work, and in the new scenes I looked upon and new acquaintances I made. I was fortunate not merely in making ac-

quaintances, but in making friends with whom I have remained on terms of friendship, whatever the distance between their homes and mine may be.

I received about this time a pressing and a very tempting offer to deliver a course of lectures in Australia, and I believe that if I could have accepted the offer and could then have made the lectures worthy of the attention and interest of the audiences, I might have realised a very substantial result from the enterprise,— the result which would have been especially satisfactory to me just then. But at the time when the offer was made to me it was not in my power to enter on so long an engagement and at such a distance, and thus I missed my opportunity of seeing and studying that new world of Australasia which it had long been one of my dreams to visit. I might, of course, have put myself in the way of inviting a renewal of the offer, and for some time I was quite resolved to take such a course; but, as I shall have to tell my readers presently, the fates were against me, and I was allowed no chance of addressing an Australian audience and studying the life of the great rising colonies now grouped in the Australian Dominion.

I still enjoyed my life in the House of Commons, although the division which had maimed the strength of the Irish party was a source of constant pain to all of us, and, to make it still

worse, had a discontented section in that majority of the party that I had lately been leading. We had amongst us a group of men, just as sincere Nationalists as we, who looked upon everything done by the majority with an intensely critical eye. Among this small group of our members this disposition increased rather than diminished when John Dillon became leader of the party, and probably for the reason which I have already given. Dillon had come into Parliamentary life at the time with most of these men; he belonged in years to the younger order of members, and men of his own age were less ready to submit to his control than they might have been to that of one who belonged to an elder generation. Then there were in our party some two or three men who were not naturally disposed to submit to leadership of any kind.

It is only right to point out that these internal divisions among the members of the Irish party were merely such as anybody might see in the history of any Parliamentary party, if he had an opportunity of studying it closely. We all know that even among the members of a British Cabinet, which nevertheless holds together for years, there are frequent differences of opinion as to this or that stroke of policy; that there are men who do not believe, and do not always profess to believe, that the Prime Minister is fitted for the position he holds; that there are members of the

Cabinet who are jealous and distrustful of others; that in the Administration just outside the Cabinet there are men who believe that they themselves ought to be inside while others ought to be outside. We do not need to study the "Greville Memoirs" or the "Creevy Papers" in order to know that men occasionally hold seats in the same Administration or the same Cabinet who have a strong personal dislike for each other, and are not always able to keep their feelings under control. In the party of Irish Nationalists which I had for the time the honour of leading, there were some men who did not always agree with the policy adopted by the majority, and who occasionally gave to their expressions of antagonism something of a personal character.

During the famous sittings in Committee Room No. 15 while Parnell was endeavouring to carry his policy by a rush, a strong opposition was set up against this mode of action by some of those who believed, as I did, that the retirement of our leader from active politics was essential for the time. When the debate was becoming persistent, Parnell suddenly rose to his feet and, with a glance of scorn at his opponents and a tone of humour in his voice, declared that Irish Nationalists ought to reserve for the House of Commons and not display in their own private meetings the policy of obstruction which some of those present were then trying to carry out. Even in the party afterwards

led by me and then by John Dillon, there were times when one might have felt inclined to adopt the rebuke of Parnell and object to the policy of obstruction as a part of our tactics in our own debates. I only dwell upon these occasional divisions of opinion in the Nationalist party to make it clear that neither to John Dillon nor to myself was the leadership of the party a position of unalloyed personal satisfaction. At the same time it has to be said in the most emphatic manner that our differences of personal opinion, even when they threatened, as they sometimes did, to border on the quarrelsome, did not in any sense affect our agreement as to our great national cause, or as to the imperative need that there was for combined action on the part of Irish National members to bring that cause at some early date to a successful issue. It was becoming more evident to the Irish members every session that the existence of two separated Irish National parties in the House of Commons was an immense disadvantage to any practical movement in the right direction. The feeling was already growing up, which took shape not long after the time at which I have now arrived and led to that National movement originated mainly by my friend William O'Brien, which brought about the union of the two parties under the leadership of him whom I may also describe as my friend, John Redmond.

In the mean time an event had taken place

which caused the most profound interest throughout the whole of the civilised world. On the 1st of March, 1894, Mr. Gladstone delivered his last speech in the House of Commons. That speech did not distinctly announce that his resignation of his seat in Parliament was to follow at once, but some members of the House had already reason to feel a strong conviction that such was the resolve of the great statesman. The speech was for the most part an emphatic and powerful protest against the conduct of the Lords by their recent interference with the action of the majority of the Commons, and by their instant rejection of measures sent up by that majority for the formal sanction of the Peers. Gladstone's speech referred directly to certain recent Bills which had been rejected by the Hereditary Chamber, but every one knew full well that the one subject he had more than all others in mind was the conduct of the Peers in rejecting the second Home Rule measure. I have always thought since then that Mr. Gladstone's reason for withholding from the House any announcement of his resolve to withdraw from Parliamentary life was that he felt unwilling to weaken the effect of his warning to the Commons, that they must resist the overbearing intrusion of the Lords, by an announcement which must, for the time, have absorbed the whole interest and feelings of his audience. I listened to every sentence of this memorable speech with the deepest emo-

tion, and until the very end I still kept on expecting some words which should announce Gladstone's farewell to his place in Parliament. But as no such words were spoken, I began to wonder whether it could be that after all the great Prime Minister had made up his mind to retain his place of power for yet a little longer. Soon after the speech had come to an end, I met John Morley in one of the lobbies and asked him whether that was indeed the last time the House was to be addressed by Mr. Gladstone. Morley assured me in few and decisive words that the speech we had heard was the very last we were ever to hear in the House of Commons from those lips.

Four days after, on the 5th of March, 1894, I had my last interview with Mr. Gladstone. He had written a short and friendly letter asking me to call on him at twelve o'clock on that day. He was still occupying his official residence in Downing Street, and he welcomed me with the kindness and cordiality which I had ever experienced from him since I came to be personally known to him. We had a long talk on political subjects, and on many other subjects as well. He assured me with all the earnestness and the emphasis so characteristic of him when he felt deeply on any question, that he was thoroughly devoted to the cause of Home Rule for Ireland, and perfectly satisfied in his mind that the Home Rule cause was destined to come, and before very long, to a trium-

phant issue. He spoke of Parnell in language of generous appreciation, and expressed his profound regret that so really great a career should have come to so sudden and disastrous an end. I did not venture to say anything on my own account about Gladstone's reasons for withdrawing from Parliamentary life, although I expressed at the very opening of our conversation the deep regret felt by my Parliamentary colleagues and myself at such a loss, and my conviction that the whole Irish people abroad, as well as at home, would feel that a tower of strength had been removed from our cause by the decision which he had taken. But in the course of our conversation Gladstone himself spoke of his reasons for what seemed to all of us a premature retirement, and talked much of his general motives for such a decision. I could easily understand, from what he told me, that he had begun to experience or at least to dread some failure in his physical powers, and that he was unwilling that the close of his career should be anything in the nature of an anti-climax. I learned from him that his sight and his hearing were growing less acute of late years than they had been, and that he found certain difficulties in carrying on the mere practical work of Parliamentary leadership which warned him that he had done enough and had better leave the stage. I could not help thinking of those touching words of Thackeray's, which declare the man

to be happy who leaves the field in time, and yields his broken sword to Fate, the conqueror, with a resigned and cheerful heart. Gladstone appeared, indeed, to have a resigned and cheerful heart no matter how much he may have regretted the necessity, borne in upon his mind, of leaving that field in which he had won so many magnificent triumphs and on which he had never dealt unfairly with any foe. His whole tone was animated and cheerful, and he showed an active interest in many subjects which had nothing to do with Parliament and political struggles. He did not speak as if this meeting of ours had the nature of a farewell; on the contrary, he expressed a strong hope that some of my Nationalist colleagues and I would visit him before long at Hawarden Castle and there interchange views as to the best means of carrying on the Home Rule cause. I left him with the full hope that I should yet have the good fortune to meet him often, but that interview in his Downing Street house was the last I was ever destined to have with him. That was, indeed, a farewell meeting, for I never saw him again. I had had many opportunities in previous years of enjoying his society and his great intellectual gifts. I had often been a guest at his London home and at Dollis Hill, had met him at other houses, and was always treated by him with friendliness and confidence. He had consulted with me privately from time to time on political subjects

of passing interest, and had always seemed to me thoroughly frank in the exposition of his views and in his questions as to my opinions. I could not but feel that his passing out of the Parliamentary world, while it closed a great and ever memorable era in English history, closed for me a chapter of profound interest in the story of my life.

CHAPTER XXII

BROKEN HEALTH

MEANWHILE, to return to my personal narrative, I had removed from my pleasant home in Chelsea and taken up my residence in a more central part of London. I had taken a house in Eaton Terrace, near Eaton Square, and was thus within easier reach of Westminster Palace. I left Chelsea with much reluctance. The Chelsea region was hallowed to me by many old associations and by many feelings of personal regard. In Chelsea I had made my earliest experiences of London life, and it is above all things else a picturesque quarter hallowed by historic memories, and has long been a recognised habitation of literature and art. It seemed something like a descent into the commonplace to pass into one of the newer parts of London, to a region which seldom reminds one of the storied past. But I had found it well-nigh impossible to get through all my literary work and to give the necessary attention to my Parliamentary duties while living in the comparatively distant Chelsea district. The House of Commons had begun to hold frequent winter sessions, and it was a toilsome journey in the early winter mornings to

get from Westminster Palace to Cheyne Gardens. The man who could afford to keep a carriage would have little occasion to trouble himself about the longer distance, but I was not thus fortunately endowed. The House of Commons habitually concluded its sitting at an hour when there was no railway communication with Chelsea, and often in weather when it was not quite easy to get a hansom cab to undertake the journey. On any nights when I was not engaged in the House of Commons, I was sure to be writing a late leading article for the "Daily News," and the drive from the offices in the City to Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea, at perhaps three o'clock in the morning and perhaps in a thick London fog, was an enterprise requiring some courage and patience. I have some recollections of expeditions thus undertaken to reach my home during a fog, of the cabman finally declaring it impossible for him to make his way, of the horse falling down by mistaking the flagged sidewalk for the open road, and of having ultimately to get out of the vehicle altogether, leave the cab driver and his horse to their fate, and try to find my way as best I could through the bewildering darkness. It was a relief to me to settle down in Eaton Terrace, where I was quite near to Sloane Square Station, from which the Underground Railway could carry me at any hour when trains were running to Westminster Station, where an underground passage led into the precincts of

Westminster Palace. That house in Eaton Terrace was my last London residence.

I paid two visits to Ireland during these later days, each visit having to do with political affairs, and neither possessing the charms of holiday-making. The later of these two visits to my native country, the last that I have yet paid, was on an occasion when a great National Convention of Irishmen was gathered together in Dublin to consider the state of political affairs with regard to the interests of Ireland and her cause. The Convention was attended by influential and distinguished Irishmen from all parts of Great Britain and Ireland, from the United States, Canada, and Australasia, and, indeed, from every country in the world where Irishmen had made a settlement and found a home. The result of the Convention, of the speeches made, and the resolutions adopted there, was to encourage the Irish Parliamentary party to go boldly and unflinchingly on with their constitutional agitation for Ireland's cause, and to promise that the support of Irishmen everywhere should be given to enable them to bring the movement to a full success.

I cannot help associating the memory of that great Convention with a somewhat absurd incident, which I may narrate for the amusement of my readers. I had to cross from Dublin to Holyhead on a night of wild storm and furiously tossing seas. It was not my evil fortune to be trou-

bled with sea-sickness; but as it was impossible to move about in the agitated steamer, and not worth while to get into a berth, I stretched myself on a sofa in one of the small cabins, and comforted myself with the reflection that even though the passage might be considerably delayed, it must come to an end before very long. I had not quite counted on all the perils of the Irish Channel. I was literally tossed off my sofa by a tremendous lurch of the steamer, which turned over nearly on its side. I was flung violently against the opposite sofa, and when I tried to get on my feet was thrown down again, my face coming each time into collision with the framework of the sofa. When I settled down at last, determined to hold on to my couch with clutching hands, I found that I had received several cuts on the forehead and cheek-bones and was bleeding somewhat freely. The cuts proved to be merely superficial and harmless, and when we got into Holyhead at last I was able to go on with the railway journey as if nothing had happened. I went home, had my cuts and bruises properly looked after, and found that they came to nothing of importance. There were, however, several marks left on my forehead and under my eyes, and when I reached the House of Commons lobby that evening I came upon a group of English members, to all of whom I was well known. I was about to narrate my adventure to them, when one of them humorously said,

"You need not tell us anything — we know that you have been attending the meetings of the Irish National Convention in Dublin, for we see the marks of the discussion on your face." The joke passed round the lobby, and had a success of its own for the time.

The last speech I ever made in the House on a subject of any importance was at the time when it was proposed to set up a great statue of Oliver Cromwell somewhere within the precincts of Westminster Palace. The Liberal Government of the day was in favour of the suggestion, but we of the Irish National party felt that we could not allow such a proposal to pass without resolute opposition. My colleagues wished me to take part in the debate, and I readily agreed to do so. I pointed out to the House of Commons, when the debate came on, that the whole historical association of Cromwell with Ireland was one of merciless oppression and cruelty, and that, therefore, so long as Irish National representatives sat in the British House of Commons, it was as much an outrage on their feelings to raise a statue of Cromwell in the precincts of Westminster Palace as it would be to the citizens of Antwerp or Brussels or Amsterdam to raise a statue there to the Duke of Alva. John Morley, who was then Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, spoke with much good feeling and sympathy, and admitted that he had not until then quite understood how deep and strong

was the national feeling of Irishmen with regard to the policy and the actions of Cromwell in Ireland. By our movement we succeeded, at all events, in obtaining a postponement and a modification of the proposal. I mention this fact chiefly because it has a deep significance as illustrating Irish national sentiment, and partly for the personal reason that it was the last time when I took part in Parliamentary debate on any subject calling for printed record.

I was greatly gratified some time afterwards to read in one of the published articles of my friend Henry W. Lucy, the "Toby M. P." of "Punch" and contributor to many other periodicals, the statement that Mr. Gladstone fully approved of the action I had taken with regard to the proposed statue to Cromwell within the precincts of Westminster Palace. Mr. Lucy told his readers the words in which Mr. Gladstone expressed his opinion to a social group of whom Lucy made one. I felt when I read of the incident that I could not have had any higher approval of the course which my Nationalist colleagues and I had made up our minds to pursue.

In the April of 1897 appeared the fifth volume of "A History of Our Own Times." This volume brought the story down from 1880 to the Diamond Jubilee. A great crisis in my life then interrupted for a while my literary occupations and brought to a close my Parliamentary career.

Soon after the publication of that fifth volume of my history I was struck down by a serious illness. It seems to me, indeed, when looking back on that part of my life, as if I had fallen off some high place and lay for a while stunned and motionless on the hard ground. I had never suffered from any really dangerous illness before. I had actually passed the age of fifty without having had to consult a doctor on my own account except when going through the preliminary examination for the completion of a life insurance. In later years, after I had accomplished my half-century, I had suffered from influenza during the famous year of influenza in England, and soon after had an attack of sciatica and other such ailments, but I had got over them each and all without any serious detriment to my general health. I suppose it was my robust constitution that tempted me into overwork and the neglect of the ordinary rules of life which are needed to keep one's health in good order. I had kept on taxing my physical resources to their very utmost by daily and nightly work at literature and journalism, and by close attendance at the House of Commons during its sittings, which had of late come to be added to by frequent winter sessions. Then I enjoyed society a great deal, went to many dinner parties during the season, visited the theatres whenever I could get a chance, and seldom failed to attend the first night of any new play. While the House

of Commons was sitting, I, like most others of my colleagues, had often to cut a dinner short and to be content with dining at any hour, early or late, when the debate gave us a chance. I had to attend a great many public meetings and to deliver lectures here and there, and for some years had been able to do little or nothing in the way of holiday-making. All these causes would have brought about a break-down of some kind for one who was already sinking into years, but I held on to the very last without a suspicion that the break-down was near at hand. I lay for a long time in my home at Eaton Terrace wholly unconscious, and even when the worst of the danger was over, I was still for some weeks not quite sure of my own identity or that of those who came around me. I was well cared for, however. My son and daughter were to me as ministering angels, and I am firmly convinced that to the skill of my dear friend Mr. W. H. Staveley, the eminent member of the College of Surgeons, and to the care which was given me under his direction, I owe what I may literally describe as my restoration to life. There is no need for me to linger over this dreary chapter of my personal history, but I have to say something of it because it brought about the close of my public career. I can never forget and never could adequately describe the kind and constant attentions I received from my friends, and even from some with whom I had never been on terms of

private friendship. I have many delightful recollections of the days when I found myself returning once again to full consciousness, and to a sense of the enjoyment which can be had even in London from the atmosphere of a summer day. When I had recovered strength enough to take a walk in Cadogan Place Gardens, near our house, I began to feel as if I were reborn and were brought into a new and fresh world. But these delicious sensations soon began to be modified by the knowledge that I must, for a time at least, give up all manner of work, that I must leave London before the summer came to an end, and that there was no probability of my being able soon to resume my place as a member of the House of Commons.

My kindly doctor ordained that I must seek for rest and recovery in some seaside region where the atmosphere was especially clear and bracing. The little town or village of Westgate-on-Sea was fixed upon as the place of immediate settlement. My son and daughter and I were glad of this, for we had had some acquaintance already with the region of my new home. Some years before, we had passed the greater part of one winter at Westgate-on-Sea and had liked the place very much, although, at that robust period of my life, we used to rush up to town frequently in order that I might take part in some political business, or that we might all be present at some interesting dramatic

performance. This time, however, my stay at Westgate-on-Sea was not to be diversified by any expeditions to London, and I knew that I must make all other considerations subservient to the restoration of my health. There was something of curious interest to a man like me in the knowledge that I must, for the first time in my life, take a long and unmoving holiday. My holiday intervals, up to this period, had been holidays of travel, of passing from one foreign country to another, from one foreign city to another, of studying closely every new scene and object that came in my way, and keeping my faculties always as much alive and active as possible for the appreciation of succeeding novelties. Now I was to leave London and settle down for a time in a quiet sea-coast village with which I was already well acquainted, and where in any case there was nothing much to be seen, and my object was to give to my physical and mental faculties as complete and lethargic a rest as could well be obtained.

When about to leave London I had no idea that my retirement was to be anything more than an interval of rest, the interval necessary to restore an invalid to his habitual good health and capacity for active work. I daresay I should have left London in somewhat of a tragic mood if I had known that I was making my final farewell to the life of the metropolis, and especially to the

life of the House of Commons. But I had no idea of the kind and was wisely kept from anything which might suggest such an idea, so my assumption was that when I had recruited my strength I should be able to return to London and to my Parliamentary duties. My departure from London was, therefore, without anything of that dramatic or romantic mood which would accompany the fall of the curtain at the close of a momentous act in life's drama. As the train left the London terminus I might have been making a mental retrospect of all the years I had spent in that city, where it had been so long my ambition to settle and to struggle; where I had settled and struggled from early manhood to later years, had found my way into literature and politics, had met with some degree of success, had made so many dear friendships, and suffered some heavy griefs. But on my way to the sea-coast my mind was not occupied by any such reflections. I fully expected to get back to my old life and my old work and to a London home before many months should have passed away. I had not then any thought of withdrawing from political life and resigning my seat in the House of Commons, and was merely ready to give up to complete rest as much time and no more as I supposed would be necessary for my restoration to health. My thoughts, therefore, as we were leaving London, were of as commonplace a kind as one might have at the

opening of an ordinary holiday, and I did not even cast one longing, lingering look behind.

We went to Westgate on one of the closing days of July, 1897. My daughter and I settled there at first in lodgings looking on the sea, and soon began to enjoy the sunshine, the skies, the waves, and the quietude. My son was at that time actively engaged in dramatic work, and it was not possible for him to withdraw himself altogether from London and consign himself to a do-nothing existence in our sea-coast village. But he was with us whenever his engagements allowed him a temporary release, and the time went smoothly and pleasantly along. The quiet and the fresh sea breezes enabled me to improve steadily in health, and we had many visits of London friends to brighten our retirement. But it soon became evident to me that I was threatened with a trouble to the sight which would have to be carefully dealt with. From my earliest recollections I had suffered from extremely short sight, but until quite lately it had been strong sight, although short, and had doomed me to no further penalty than the wearing of glasses. But I suppose that during my years of work as author, journalist, and politician I must have remorselessly overtaxed that strength of the eyes on which I was putting so much strain, and the result was that I now found it necessary to undergo some serious operations at the hands of a well-known London oculist. These operations

compelled me for a time to take up my abode in a private hospital kept by him at Margate, and afterwards for some weeks in the Royal Eye Hospital, London, where he could give me closer attendance than would be possible at his seaside house. It may seem strange to say that I have on the whole very genial recollections of the weeks I passed in that London hospital. Numbers of my London friends came to see me every day when I could be seen, and made the time very pleasant for me despite the operations, the bandages, and the intervals of complete darkness which belonged to the process of cure. I was told of everything going on in the living world outside, books and newspapers were read to me by kindly friends, my son and daughter were constantly with me, and the time passed brightly notwithstanding its hours of unavoidable darkness. The work of cure, so far as it could be accomplished, came to an end before long. I was told that everything the skill of the oculist could do had been done for me, and that I might return to my resting-place by the sea. It was, however, now quite certain that for reading and writing I must henceforward rely on the eyes of others and not my own, and I need hardly dilate on the meaning of such privation to one who from his very childhood had ever been a reader of books. But I could see all the objects of life around me quite well enough for all ordinary enjoyment of existence, I could appreciate a landscape or the

changing colours of the sea, a rivulet, a flower-bed, a hedge-row, or a valley as well as I could ever have done, and I came back to the sea-coast village with the very vivid impression that life for me might still be well worth the living.

Gradually I grew to be acquainted with the fact that I must give up for a long time all thought of residence in London. My doctor was resolute in his opinion that only by remaining in a seaside region, where the air was especially bracing, could I hope for anything like a restoration to health. London was wholly unsuitable to me for any such purpose. I was not to go back to London, I was not to take any part in political work, I was not to think of daily journalism, and even any literary labour I might undertake in my seaside home was to be strictly limited to a certain number of hours each day, and this working-time was to be divided into two or more separate portions. I had the most perfect faith in his advice, and I knew well that but for him the work of my lifetime would have come to a close in that London home where the illness had stricken me down. The great fact now borne in upon my mind was that I must begin an entirely new kind of life, and must give up all idea of becoming once again a resident in London. There was something strange to me in the thought that I must restrict my literary work to so many hours a day, a very small number of hours, divided into two or three portions. Up to

the break-down in my health I had always tried to get my work done as quickly as possible, and to keep at work for as many hours of each day as were at my own disposal. It seemed to me rather late in the day to enter upon an entirely new system of living, and yet beyond all question only that new system could give me any chance of prolonged life. The world seemed to have changed its aspect altogether for me, and to have put me under absolutely new conditions.

Of course, if one looked at the prospect with calm and philosophic mind, there might not appear much to grumble at. I was coming back more and more every day to a fair state of strength and, except for the weakness of my sight, which might possibly not be permanent, I was better in physical health than I had been for many years before. To live a quiet life on a fine sea-coast, with picturesque rising grounds sloping softly from the waters and a shelf of marble-white cliffs half enclosing one bay, — to live there among friends and having other friends within easy reach might have been welcomed by an elderly gentleman as a very enviable manner of existence. I could always beguile my leisure time by an occasional turn at literary work, and I had good hopes that the public would still take an interest in my books. Luckily for me, too, the reality of the change did not come home to my mind all at once, and I still could not help a certain half-con-

scious feeling that the present condition of things was only a restful episode, and that some time or other I should go back to my place as an active worker in the Irish national cause. Life began to go on very smoothly for me, and I became from month to month more reconciled to my life of enforced inactivity. I soon was able to walk vigorously again, and I spent most of my time in the open air. Many friends came down from London to see me, and I was always kept in touch with everything going on in the world of literature and art and politics. Some of the old-established and quiet residents of the place were occasionally surprised by the visits paid to Westgate-on-Sea by strangers bearing eminent names in these three great worlds. The descent into inactivity was made gradual and smooth for me. There were some residents of our little community whose intellectual qualities and whose past experience in various forms of active life made them interesting companions, — the retired soldier, the retired sailor, the scholarly clergyman, chaplain to a local hospital, the member of Parliament who had made the place his regular home when the House of Commons was not sitting, — these and others like them had made homes and were bringing up families here, and in their houses I spent many pleasant and congenial hours. Before long the healthful qualities of the region began to have so strengthening an effect upon me that I found

myself in a condition to resume my literary work, and to congratulate myself on being once again a living author, and no longer doomed to the monotonous mental quietude or the yet more trying disquietude of the mere invalid.

CHAPTER XXIII

RETIREMENT

Before long I settled down to my literary work once again. My manner of working was, however, greatly changed from what it had been since my earliest days of authorship. I could no longer do any writing for myself, but had to dictate my "copy" to a professional typewriter. I had been among the first of the authors and journalists in England who adopted the typewriter in preference to pen and ink, and the whole of my novel "Miss Misanthrope," published in 1877, was accomplished by me through the medium of the typewriter. I kept on using it for all the succeeding years previous to my break-down in health, and when I did not work at it myself, I dictated my stories and histories to my secretary. Now that I was recovering my health and strength at the seaside, I found that the state of my eyes did not allow me to try them by typewriting for myself, and I once again utilized the services of a professional worker for the purpose.

One of the first products of my returning health was to me an especial labour of love. It was a book called "Reminiscences," and was published

in two substantial volumes by Chatto & Windus in London and Harper & Brothers in New York, early in 1899. As I had left London in broken-down health at the close of July, 1897, the publication of "Reminiscences" gave substantial evidence that my restoration to health had not been very slow, and had not been followed by any long interval of idleness. The book was dedicated to my dear friend the London physician, but for whose skill and care I should never have lived to add to my stock of published volumes. The publication of my "Reminiscences" recalls to my mind an observation which was made to me by an elderly resident of Westgate-on-Sea, who was kind enough to tell me one day that he had been reading my book and was much interested in it. He complimented me on what he considered my wonderful memory, and spoke of the pleasure it gave him to read descriptions of distinguished personages by an author who had actually seen and known them. Then he went on to say: "I suppose, Mr. McCarthy, you must have seen and can well remember George the Third; I wish you had told us something about him." I explained as gracefully as I could that Providence had not given me any opportunity of looking upon George the Third. As I had always pleased my thoughts by fancying that I appeared rather younger than my actual age, and was now somewhat rudely awakened from that beguiling fancy, I thought it well to change the subject.

Soon after this I completed two volumes for the series entitled "The Story of the Nations," published by Fisher Unwin in London and G. P. Putnam's Sons in New York. The first volume was called "Modern England before the Reform Bill," and the second "Modern England from the Reform Bill to the Present Time," and these made their appearance in 1899, within two years from the date of my settlement in the picturesque Isle of Thanet.

I now began to regard myself as readmitted to the order of working authors, and I was gratified and not a little surprised that so much could be done by working steadily day after day for less than two hours in the forenoon and about the same time in the afternoon. My self-satisfaction was all the greater when I bore in mind that all this time I could read nothing for myself, and that whatever I wished to learn from books or newspapers had to be read aloud to me. To a writer engaged in historical works requiring incessant reference to authorities and comparison of dates, it makes, I need hardly say, a very considerable difference whether he can read for himself or is compelled to have everything read out for him. The difference impressed itself on me most distinctly when the daily necessity arose for obtaining information of the world's doings from the newspapers. I was still intensely interested in everything going on in the living world, and even

if I had not had a literary trade to follow, I never could prevail upon myself to dispense with the reading of the morning and evening journals. I could not do without knowing what was going on in political life at home and abroad, and I was always anxious to have not merely the actual news but also the comments of the leader-writers on the news. Now I should like to ask any of my readers to make a few experiments in order to realise the difference between taking a newspaper in his hand, flashing his eyes along its columns to see what he thinks it necessary to read and what he may leave unread, and the slow process of having half a column read deliberately out to him before he can decide whether he has had enough of that particular column or must hear it to the end. We all know with what rapidity the newspaper reader can skim over page after page, and get into his mind all that he wants. But when one has to be read to, there can be no skimming, and merely reading out the titles of each piece of news or each critical commentary seems often to the impatient listener as if it were destined to absorb all the time at his command.

I feel rather proud of the fact that I was able, when once I fairly began to recover my health, to keep in touch with the passing story of the world as told by the leading journals. My interest in politics at home, and especially in the doings of the House of Commons, never faded for a moment,

and the progress of our Irish national struggle was followed by me with a close and unfailing attention from day to day. Some of my political colleagues came down from London now and again to visit me and talk with me. John Dillon, Edward Blake, T. P. O'Connor, Michael Davitt, and others thus brightened my retirement; and living not far from me in Ramsgate was my old colleague in the House, Edward Sheil, who had now retired from public life. My old friend and former editor, Frank Harrison Hill, under whose leadership I had been attached to the "Daily News," spent a holiday once in our vicinity, and Herbert Paul, the distinguished journalist and essayist, made more than one stay in Westgate. I felt that I might be congratulated on the many happy conditions which surrounded and brightened my retirement, and I hope I was properly thankful for that restoration to health which enabled me to enjoy all the many advantages of my new life. Many of the brightest days I have ever known were spent in that quiet village which I had looked upon merely as a temporary refuge, which had indeed seemed like a prison to me when first it was made certain that I must not think of leaving it for years to come. In sober truth, although I was still an invalid and compelled to arrange all the details of my daily life accordingly, I positively began to feel much younger than I had felt during my later years in London. I do not propose

to give my readers a description of the books I worked at after my settlement by the sea, but there are some of them which may be made the subject of a passing notice. I finished in Westgate-on-Sea my "History of the Four Georges." The first volume of this history was published in 1884. The second made its appearance in 1890, so that there was an interval of six years between the issue of the first and second volume. My incessant Parliamentary work during those years had prevented me from giving that steady attention and careful preparation indispensable to the production of any manner of historical narrative which claims to be worth putting on the shelves of a library. After the second volume had come out, there was another long interval, again caused by my absorption in political and Parliamentary work, and then came the break-down of my health and my consequent withdrawal from London life. Now that I found myself recovering once more and had tested my strength by other writings, I resolved to settle down at once to the completion of "The Four Georges." In this task I received the most effective help from my son, who spent all the time he could spare from London with my daughter and me in our seaside retirement. The third and fourth volumes, including the reign of William the Fourth, appeared in 1901, and the volumes bore on their title-pages the names of the two authors who had collaborated in their preparation. The three novels

I wrote in collaboration with my friend Mrs. Campbell-Praed, and the third and fourth volumes of the Georges, were the only volumes I produced in literary coöperation. My son was soon destined to accomplish a dramatic success, which naturally inspired him to give up his whole time to dramatic work. He had in previous years made an encouraging success by the writing of plays belonging to the order of modern comedy, plays which dealt altogether with the ways of social life in the England of our time. In one instance he had taken the central idea of his play from a modern French comedy, but he had so completely Anglicised the scenes and characters as to convert it almost into an original English play. This piece, which was called "The Candidate," met with a distinct success, and offered much temptation to my son to devote himself altogether to light comedy of the same order. His own strong and sincere inclinations were, as I well knew, for the writing of poetic and romantic dramas which would carry his audiences away from the narrow limits of the modern stage, and should strive to recall some audiences at least to the realms of imagination and of poetical feeling. Not long after the publication of the two historical volumes which came from our collaboration, he achieved a remarkable success by his drama "If I Were King." This play had a great reception in the United States and in England, and it became necessary for my son to spend

a considerable time in America in order to look after the production of his drama. "If I Were King" was soon followed by the writing and the production of "The Proud Prince," which seems to have achieved a yet greater success in the United States than its predecessor. My son had now found his true literary path, and much as I had enjoyed his coöperation in my historical work, I welcomed with the most cordial delight the success which had come to him in that field of poetic and imaginative drama which it had ever been his ambition to cultivate.

While my son was on the other side of the Atlantic, I began my "Reign of Queen Anne," which my publishers, Messrs. Chatto & Windus, who brought out "A History of Our Own Times" and "The Four Georges," had urged me to attempt. The task was in every way delightful to me, but I felt many doubts as to whether I could add anything to the many narratives already published in commemoration of the important events and the illustrious figures of that most remarkable period. It did not, however, need much pressure to induce me to venture on a piece of work so thoroughly congenial with my historical and literary tastes, and I set about my labours with renewed energy. I could not help at the time reflecting on the somewhat curious fortune which had made my historical productions re-trace history from the actual present to the already distant past. Most

writers of history begin with the past and bring the story nearer and nearer to the present. I began with the story of our own times, of events all of which had happened since my birth and many under my own observation. When I finished the first four volumes of that history, I had no idea of going backward into more distant days. After a while, however, I undertook the Four Georges, and was then advised and encouraged to go still farther into the past and venture on the story of Queen Anne's reign. I greatly enjoyed my work at the Queen Anne narrative, and its two volumes made their appearance in 1902. I wrote also about this time a small volume called "Ireland and Her Story" for "The Story of the Empire" series edited by Mr. Howard Angus Kennedy. Soon after I brought out a volume called "British Political Portraits," a collection in book form of a number of articles which originally appeared in New York in "The Outlook," under the direction of my friend Mr. William B. Howland. My latest work is called "Portrait of the Sixties," published in London by Mr. Fisher Unwin, at whose suggestion and to illustrate whose valuable collection of photographs the work was undertaken. Nor must I forget to mention, even at the risk of seeming to advertise myself, the fact that during all this busy time I also planned and completed a novel called "Mononia." This was an undertaking entirely of my own choice. It was a story

of the Irish rebellion of "Forty-Eight," and was intended to picture through the medium of a love tale the conditions, the hopes, and the efforts of Young Ireland during that period when I, then a youth in my eighteenth year, first became engaged in a political struggle for the national cause of my country. "Mononia" appeared in the first instance as a serial in "The Freeman's Journal" of Dublin, and was published in London by Chatto & Windus. The book was to me a labour of love, and I entered on it also with the hope that it might give to English and American readers a fair and genuine description of Ireland's condition at the time, and of the feelings and motives of those who, whether wisely or unwisely, believed that it was better, even by a desperate policy, to call the attention of the world to the reality of Ireland's national cause than to allow events to drag their slow length along without a resolute protest which must resound through all the civilized countries of the earth. I am afraid that the book was not likely to become very popular among English novel-readers, and I did not expect that it would be much in demand at the circulating libraries, but I felt well satisfied with the hope that here and there some English men or women might read it and find that it appealed to their sympathies with the cause of an oppressed nationality, for whose sufferings English rule was mainly responsible. Though the book never became very popular, I have nothing

whatever to complain of as to the manner in which it was reviewed by the English journals. Many kindly things were said of it, even in newspapers which could not be expected to have any sympathy with the Irish national cause, and no feeling of political prejudice appears to have affected its British reviewers. I had put a good deal of my own early life and early companionships, and of the atmosphere and scenery by which these were surrounded, into the novel, although the love story was entirely a creature of my imagination. I felt in writing it as if I were offering a tribute to the memory of the dead and a message of encouragement to the living national cause.

Thus the months and the years passed away in quietude and in work which, although easy and purposely made easy, was continuous and was never neglected. One event came to pass which could not but be regarded as memorable in a life like mine. I had at last made up my mind, reluctantly, indeed, and only on the pressure of wise counsels, that there was no likelihood of my being able to return to the work of the House of Commons. My constituents of Longford were most patient and tolerant, and I believe that if I could have formed any hopes of a return within a reasonable time to Parliamentary duties, they would have allowed me the longest possible period of rest, and never expressed any wish for my resignation. But the political period was one of

great importance for the Irish national cause, a General Election was certain to come soon, and in the new Parliament Ireland must have her full number of active and constantly attending members in the House of Commons. The Irish National party was now thoroughly united under the leadership of John Redmond, and it was absolutely necessary that the party should show its strength in the divisions as well as the debates of the House. When the dissolution of the existing Parliament was evidently near at hand, I wrote to my constituents and announced my intention not to seek for reëlection. My reasons were easily explained. I could not promise constantly to attend Parliament, and I could not be the means of depriving my constituents and my country of their full representation under existing political conditions. My Parliamentary career therefore came to an end with the General Elections of 1900, and I could not but feel that the most important part of my life had drawn to its close. I hope I may not be considered too egotistical when I say that it must ever be to me the brightest memory of my working lifetime that I was able to give twenty-one years of continuous service, such as it was, to the cause of Ireland, that I felt a pride, too, in having been so long a member of the House of Commons, and that my feeling of personal pride was not lessened by the fact that I had gained nothing in the worldly sense, but on the contrary had lost much

by turning from the quiet paths of literature into the excitement and the exhaustion of political and Parliamentary warfare. I was not vain enough to suppose that I had rendered any substantial service to the Irish national cause, but it was at all events something to have served among the representatives of Ireland, and to have shown that I, too, could make some sacrifice for her cause. So I reconciled myself to my position and bade farewell to Parliamentary life, not, indeed, without a regretful glance backwards on the stirring scenes which I was now leaving forever.

Except during the actual months of my complete break-down from illness, I never ceased to contribute a monthly article to "The Independent," a New York periodical to which I became a regular contributor during my first visit to the United States. I had written in the mean time some short stories for "Harper's Monthly" and other American magazines, and my books had all found publishers in America. It gave me none the less pleasure to be still one of the writers for an American magazine like "The Independent," because the fact formed a connecting link for me with that country where I had always been so well received, and where I had made so many dear and valued friends. I have often thought, and am afraid have rather often said, that outside my own native land there are four cities in any one of which I feel sure I should be content to live, and

these four cities are London, Paris, Rome, and New York. My dealings with American publishers have always been most satisfactory, and I have none but the most genial memories of the lengthened visits which I was happily able to pay to that great city on the Hudson River where so many bright days of my life were passed.

I now come to an event in my life which was utterly unexpected by me, and to which I must ever look back with gratitude. In the early part of the year 1903 I received from the Prime Minister, Mr. Arthur James Balfour, the announcement that King Edward VII was about to confer upon me a pension from the Crown because of services which the Prime Minister was kind enough to say I had rendered to literature. Mr. Balfour observed that such a pension had nothing to do with political questions, and he added that the Ministry had recommended the Royal favour without having consulted me on the subject. When it is remembered that Mr. Balfour and his colleagues formed a strongly Conservative Administration, and that during the whole of my Parliamentary career I had been an unceasing opponent of Conservative policy, it will be seen at once how generous and disinterested was their action towards me.

I remain, therefore, a quiet observer of the active world and its movements from a distant and secluded place of observation. I have seen with

intense satisfaction the Irish National party becoming more and more thoroughly united in the maintenance of the Irish cause and in its methods of action towards that end. I have felt, too, an increasing pride and pleasure in the spread of the national spirit throughout Ireland, and in that one of its later developments which strives with a continually growing success for the revival of that ancient language and literature which seem to belong to the very atmosphere of Ireland, and to be as much a part of her characteristic life as are her mountains, her lakes, her green valleys, and her rushing rivers. I may say that I have even been endeavouring of late to employ some of my spare moments for the purpose of making myself acquainted with the elements of that which might well be considered my native language, but which since my boyish days I had never found leisure or opportunity to study. I think that with the mention of this somewhat belated effort on my part, the story of this Irishman may be brought to an appropriate close.

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